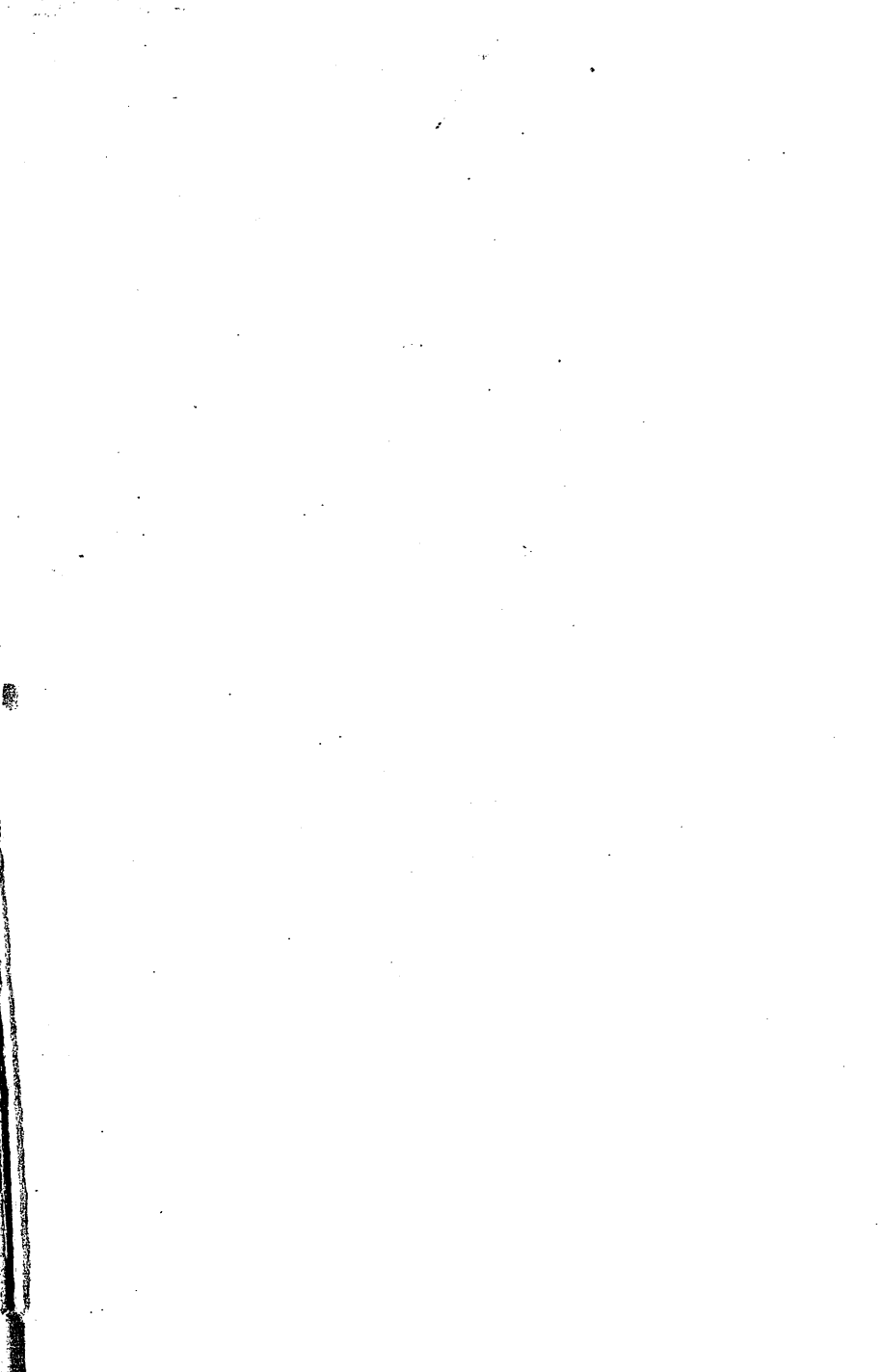


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OF
PAUL

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STUDIES IN RELIGION AND CULTURE

SCHERMERHORN LECTURE III

THE MIND OF PAUL

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BY
IRWIN EDMAN



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P R E F A C E

THIS book is in substance the series of Schermerhorn Lectures in Religion which the author had the honor of delivering at the invitation and under the auspices of the Department of Religion of Columbia University in the Spring of 1933.

I wish to use this place to express my appreciation for the opportunity afforded me to make this study in religious interpretation. My debts to the great leaders in technical scholarship in the field of Pauline literature will be apparent to any informed reader. I have tried in this study to make available in terms of a general philosophical interest, and for those interested in religion in its relation to human culture and imagination, the fruits of specialized research in the study of Paul, especially during the last quarter century.

To Professor James E. Frame of Union Theological Seminary, and to M. Franz Cumont of Paris, among many other living scholars, I wish to give my particular thanks for their helpful and kindly suggestions. The responsibility for the uses to which those suggestions have been put is of course my own.

I wish also to express to Mr. Reginald Call my special and grateful appreciation of the conscientious and understanding care which he devoted to the preparation of the manuscript.

I. E.

Columbia University
October, 1935.

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THE MIND OF PAUL

PAUL AND HIS INTERPRETERS

SOME apology is doubtless needed for still another, however brief a volume, upon Paul of Tarsus. It is not enough to remind the reader that the subject is one that by its consequences is enormously important in the history of Western civilization. It is not enough to say that without Paul there might have been no Christianity, and that without Christianity, Europe of the past two thousand years would have been incontestably and inconceivably different. For the library of Pauline literature and Pauline scholarship is possibly one of the most extensive ever devoted to any figure, however important. And it may justly be questioned why when every issue, indeed every word has been scrutinized by theologians, philologists, and historians of religion, there is any justification for another survey of an ancient problem or the retelling of a story already thousands of times well told, and so far as story telling is concerned, best of all in the Book of Acts.

There are several good reasons, I think, why a writer with no pretensions to originality of scholarship or to theological enthusiasms or commitments should essay again an often essayed task. For the fact remains that for all the wealth of Pauline scholarship it has, with few and notable exceptions, been lost in philological minutiae or been interested in making theological points; the purely historical researches in

philology and theology need to be supplemented by a critical interpretation of the mind of Paul. Pauline scholarship has been interested in glorifying a saint or in justifying him, or often in modern times disposing of him. It has been caught up in the legalism of his terminology or the melodrama of his wanderings. It has seldom treated Paul from the point of view of his place in the history of the religious imagination and the philosophical history of the West.

It is, moreover, only within the last half century that the whole Pauline episode in the history of Christianity has been treated in the perspective of the scholarship of comparative religion. Since that time, there have been such important lights thrown on the problem of Paul, that it is about time for a stock taking and a re-survey. What, in the light of the best available scholarship and a reconsideration (which is the fruit of that scholarship) of the documents themselves, above all the Epistles, are we to make of the mind of Paul, his antecedents and his decisive contribution to Christian thought and feeling? What is here proposed, then, is neither history nor archæology nor philosophy nor biography, but what for want of a better word may, it is hoped not too pretentiously, be called a philosophical treatment; not an exhaustive treatise, but an essay in critical interpretation.

So great indeed is the burden of Pauline scholarship that the first clarifying attempt at analysis must be to a disentanglement of the threads of Pauline interpretation from Paul himself. The reader needs to be reminded that, for Paul's biography, despite all the

mountain of interpretation, we are ultimately dependent on the closing chapters of the Book of Acts, for his doctrine, on the Epistles themselves (which with the exception of the Book of Timothy, we may hold to be genuine).

We need to be reminded that these letters are not letters in the formal literary sense,¹ but actually intimate letters, addressed to living persons in living congregations and communities; that it is largely a matter of accident, however important the consequences of that accident may be, that have made those letters part of the accredited corpus of Christian canonical literature. To understand Paul, we must not begin with Paulinism, we must not consider letters of a living and passionate personality, as a doctrine meditated in a study, or a theology already finished and familiar. To understand Paul we need to rid ourselves of several accidents of historical perspective. The Paul we are seeking must be understood not in the light of subsequent theological interpretation or later theological argument, not Paul in the light of his consequences, but in the light of himself so far as we are able to distinguish him, in the setting of his contemporaries and antecedents.

The first piece of corrective interpretation is, perhaps, best put negatively. Paul was not a theologian and certainly neither a Catholic nor a Protestant one. In so far as he was a theologian, he was indeed rather a rabbi than a Church father as to method, and a Greek

¹ Cf. Adolph Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, English translation.

mystic as to feeling and temper. His dialectic and his habit of allegory were rabbinical, and the Law, by which both before his conversion and after it he was obsessed, was his Jewish heritage. For Paul never escaped Judaism. It was indeed his depths of involvement in it that determined the shape and depths of his Christianity. But Paul has been reduced to Paulinism; what was a living religious experience was turned in the hands of nineteenth-century scholarship into a form of Protestant theology, just as in the hands of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, Paul becomes a Catholic theologian. The interpretations of Paul have become marred and qualified by the fact that his apothegms always related to his own religious experience, and his adjurations always addressed to particular persons in particular situations became, prior to any modern interpreters of them, the sacrosanct materials of an official Christianity. The texts of Paul have been seized out of their context and pondered with all the associations of later theological discussion. And Paul has been conceived of by a retrospective fallacy of scholarship as being himself a scholar in his study weighing the themes of Predestination, of Redemption, of Sin and Salvation.

Now the contribution that Paul made to Christianity was not that of a doctrine or a system, though his passion and his devotion do revolve around some leading themes, and he was too much of a thinker not to articulate, even in the midst of controversies and personal perils, the burden of his feelings. But Paul was a human being caught by a vision and by a consuming

desire to bring others, first the Jews (before he despaired of them) and then the Gentiles to the ends of the earth, to his own saving faith. It is to this human being and to the human experience that generated that vision that we must above all turn to understand. But it is not only Paul the theologian, constructed by retrospective theologians, who has made the difficulty. It is Paul the missionary who clouds us as well. For better or for worse the popular imagination—and it is here the popular imagination rather than the systematic constructions of the learned that are at fault—has assimilated Paul to the type of fanatic preacher who might have appeared among seventeenth and eighteenth-century Wesleyans in England or nineteenth-century Continent Anabaptists or Unitarian enthusiasts in America. That this image of Paul the missionary should have become current is due, I think, largely to the popularity and the prestige of the Book of Acts, and to Paul's own description of himself as an Apostle to the Gentiles. But for all the appeal of Paul's amazing journeys through peril, hardship, and opposition, under almost intolerable conditions through unknown parts of the world, to contribute a vision of Christ, and Christ as the principle of salvation, it is hardly an adequate picture of the framer of Christianity to conceive him as a missionary simply in the sense of an itinerant preacher, trenchantly proposing a salvation and propagating with passion and tenacity a gospel that he had received at second hand and that he did not pause to meditate or examine. We have Paul's own testimony¹

¹ Galatians i, 13-21.

that after his vision of Christ on the way to Damascus, he took no human counsel, nor went up to Jerusalem to those who had been Apostles before him, but went into Arabia, and then returned to Damascus. How long Paul stayed in Arabia one does not know. But one is privileged to believe, and it is within the scope of the plausibilities of his character, that he used that solitude to turn over in his mind what was so sudden and so convulsing a conversion in his own mind, a redirection of his own character and conduct.

That Paul was a missionary and that he conceived of his own work as that of a conversion and a mission, we are certainly warranted on his own account and that of the Book of Acts to believe. He was a born propagandist even before his conversion on the road to Damascus. "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."¹ It is clear, too, that much of the opposition to Paul came from rival Christian missionaries, including the Judaizing apostles at Jerusalem. It may even be said that as a missionary Paul had delusions of grandeur, and that he conceived himself as eventually converting the whole world; it is still a part of the legend of Christianity that he got to Spain and that he contemplated going to Britain.

It was God's purpose, Paul tells us, that His Son

¹ Galatians i, 13-14.

should reveal himself to Paul, that Paul might preach Christ to the Gentiles. Paul finds it hard to separate, even in his brief account of his vision, the missionary command that came with it. And at least one of the three versions of the conversion given in the Book of Acts gives the call to go to the Gentiles as part of the very appearance of Christ to Paul. But it would be, none the less, an error of the first magnitude to conceive of Paul as first and foremost a missionary.

All accounts that stress Paul the missionary forget that he was a missionary with a difference. That difference may be said to lie in the fact—one would need little more evidence than the Epistle to the Romans—that Paul had seriously pondered the meaning of his message, and that the message itself was not a system learned in a school, nor a fanaticism acquired as a boy, but a vision experienced in a crisis of a mature life. However the conversion of Paul may be explained, the fact of it remains genuine and central. It was central certainly to his missionary activities. For he was trying to bring to the whole world, Jewish and Gentile, slave and free, salvation as it had been revealed to him unaccountably and ever afterward inextinguishably, on the road to Damascus. To understand even Paul the missionary, one must first be clear as to what he thought he was preaching, what the origins of his convictions were, and what was the context of his convictions in his own character.

There is, however, one important stress that the study of Paul's missionary activities has made clear. In the course of his preaching Paul soon discovered

that if he really had a gospel that would bring liberation and new and immortal life to all mankind, he had best give up preaching it to the Jews and to those Christians who were still Jews in spirit and in observance. It was in the course of his missionary activities—the crisis came at Antioch—that Paul was to discover the necessity of breaking (reluctant to break though he was) with the Law and with the people of Israel. He who fancied himself to have been called an Apostle to the Gentiles, was soon to learn that he could hope for success in no other quarter. His missionary journeys indeed reacted on his doctrine. He may have wondered early about the relation of obedience to the Law and Faith in Christ. But very early in his missionary activities he was to learn that, even from the point of view of his missionary activities, a choice had to be made. If Paul had not been *forced* to insist on the point that by faith in Christ and not by observance of the Law, the individual was to be saved, his doctrine might have been a less radical break with Judaism and his teaching less the autonomous and universal religion that it came to be. If Paul's missionary activities had not been contested by the Jews and the Judaizing Christians, his doctrine might have been less far reaching and original, and his preaching of it less exclusively among the Gentiles than even this Apostle to the Gentiles desired it to be.

This consideration offers a convenient transition to another point at issue among the interpreters of Paul that has given us two totally different Apostles depending on the point of view taken. Paul was a Jew

and Paul was a Greek. Both terms demand explanation, of which there will be more in the sequel. For the moment we may take both terms simply, and see how an emphasis upon Greek or Jew has rendered two almost irreconcilably different expositions of the Apostle possible.

Paul was a Jew, of course, by birth. In more than one instance he takes occasion to note, fairly to vaunt this fact. "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."¹ He was, if the credible passage in the Book of Acts is to be believed,² educated at the feet of Gamaliel, the great teacher in Jerusalem, and trained carefully to observe the Law. There are a multitude of passages, notably in the Epistle to the Romans, where he indicates his solicitude for the Jewish people, and his sense of their moral superiority to the pagans.³ There are the famous sixth and seventh Chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, where his anguish at not being able to fulfill the righteousness demanded by the Law indicates how deep-seated, even after his conversion, his traditional Judaism remained. His conception of Sin and of the Flesh is largely Jewish in origin and in character. His conception of God, whatever his conception of Christ, re-

¹ Philippians iii, 4-6.

² Acts xxii, 3.

³ Cf. Romans ix, 1-5.

mained essentially Jewish, and whatever his version of Christ became, it never totally departed from its Mes-sianic and, hence, Jewish origins. It was as a Jew that Paul spoke in the synagogues where he was first heard by both Jew and Gentile, and even as late as his letter to the congregation at Rome, he had not ceased to think of himself as a Jew. The dialectic of his thinking—and there have been few more skillful dialecticians in the history of religious thought—was rabbinical in its technique, its Biblical materials, and its allegories. His sense of the imminence of the Kingdom of God ushered in by the reappearance of Christ in glory, was as to its primary features Jewish in its materials. Neither his career nor the pre-conditions and primary elements of his doctrine would have been possible had Paul not been by thinking and feeling as well as by birth a Jew.

But to say all this is not to say, as has of late become the fashion in the interpretation of Paul, that he was nothing but or even predominantly a Jew. For had he been such, he could not possibly have enunciated a doctrine or followed a missionary career that even in his own eyes was a serious break with Judaism, and preached a doctrine that to the eyes of Jews was inevitably the most outrageous of blasphemies. To turn the Messiah into a Savior and to hold that Savior literally divine was far from acceptable either to Jewish feeling or thought; nor could Paul have thence found the materials or the inspiration for the novel synthesis that was to be for him a new life and was, he hoped, to give a new life to all mankind.

Paul was a Greek. To say that is, of course, not

to say that he was born a Greek or even that he was temperamentally a Greek, and certainly not temperamentally a Greek of the classic period. But Paul spent his boyhood in a Græco-Roman city of the Alexandrian period. Save for the period of his education at Jerusalem, he spent most of his life before his conversion there. Though the Old Testament is held by many responsible critics¹ to be the only book he had ever studied, he studied it in Greek. Though his own Greek is criticized for its syntax and its technical faults of style, it is also admitted by scholars to reveal a familiar idiomatic acquaintance with the language. His thought, including his traditional Jewish thought, moved to a Greek measure. But problematic as may be the detailed relations of Paul to the current Greek culture and Greek cults of his time, he was certainly exposed to both in the daily contact of a city geographically so situated as to catch every current wind of doctrine,² and itself the seat of several flourishing cults of the late Greek world. Paul exhibits those traits of the partially assimilated Jew familiar in all ages and in all countries. He took on the character of the world in which he lived, and long before he thought specifically of the Gentiles or of their possible salvation, he had spoken their language, understood their aspirations, and imaginatively grasped the idioms and the idiosyncrasies of their thought and feeling in religious matters.

¹ Cf. Deissmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-35.

² Cf. Sir William Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*.

Of late years it has been the fashion, largely because of the lavish and illuminating studies devoted to the Greek mystery religions, to use the mysteries as an index to and an explanation of Paul's Christianity. Certainly the notion of a dying divinity in whose resurrection and immortality the believing initiate might share has a striking parallelism, if not consanguinity, to those cults of Isis and Osiris, of Cybele and Attis, of Dionysos, which were in the air at Tarsus and in most of that pagan world where Paul was to preach his gospel of salvation. Whether Paul frequented the mysteries, whether by any long chance he was an initiate, is extremely doubtful in view of that strict Judaism which was his passion before it was succeeded by his equal passion for Christianity. The fact that Paul nowhere speaks of the influence of these mystery religions upon him, the fact that he was perhaps unconscious of them, is no testimony to their lack of influence upon him. He could not help knowing their temper and being penetrated by them, and as we shall have occasion to point out in a later passage of this book, there is internal evidence of what must either be considered a striking coincidence or at least circumstantial evidence of the relationship between his own conception of Christ and faith and salvation, and those of the mystery religions with their gods and initiation and saving participation in the death and the life again of the hero-god.

So striking indeed does this relationship become that scholars who approach Paul from the point of view of studies of current religions of the Græco-Roman world

cannot help thinking that here is to be found the keynote to and possibly the whole story of Paul's transformation of the local Jewish, almost local Galilean cult of Jesus and his immediate disciples, into the religion of Christ, world-wide in Paul's own intention and ultimately world-wide in fact. The mystery religions cannot be the whole story, though, as we shall try to show in the sequel, they may indeed be an important index to it. It cannot be the complete tale, for even if it were as simple as Paul's taking over bodily the scheme of death and resurrection of a savior-god and a participating death and resurrection of the initiate, it is clear from his own considerations in the Epistle to the Romans that the theme of the Jewish Law never ceased to preoccupy him and that if he may be assumed to have taken over the patterns of the mystery religions, he moralized and transfigured them in a way familiar to none of them and to none of their practitioners, and put them in the perspective of a history and an eschatology, in a context of first and last things, thoroughly Jewish in their origins. In so far as the mystery religions are an avenue to Paul's Christianity, the avenue is one that must be traversed with the greatest caution. For, as we shall have occasion to point out in the sequel, the actual evidence for the relationship of Paul to the mysteries in any *factual* sense in his own biography is totally lacking. The evidence is wholly circumstantial. It lies in the striking similarity of figures, images, and temper of certain passages. It lies in the fact that, in the hands of Paul, Christianity became what Loisy calls an "economy of

salvation," an economy whose principles use the same terms as the mystery cults.

But these similarities of language and parallelism of themes and methods of salvation, whatever be their explanation, are there. Whether Paul was an "adept" in the mystery religions or not, he certainly did use their vocabulary, and it was language extraordinarily calculated to appeal to a public familiar with them. Paul was perhaps by nature a missionary: he was well fitted by his upbringing and by the many adult years he spent in Tarsus, both to have acquired, by a kind of osmosis, a religious vocabulary widely current and to frame his own message in a form well-known to a pagan public. Whether or not Paul primarily thought of salvation through Christ as a mystery, as he certainly seems to,¹ he had the propagandist's instinctive sense of what form his auditors would understand. He knew at once what he wished to preach and what his hearers would understand and by what they would be moved. He knew what was blasphemy to the Jews, what foolishness to the Greeks.

That Paul had been brought up in a Greek city exposed to the four winds of cults and creeds helps to account for the fact that passionate Jew though he was and remained half reluctantly to the end, he could see around Judaism and finally have the determination, assuredly not without bitterness, to break with it. Though born a Jew, he had known the Gentiles from infancy. He could never have looked at those without the pale of the Jewish faith and Jewish orthodoxy

¹ I Corinthians xv, 51.

quite as Jesus did, who must scarcely have heard of anyone else, and who thought of himself as having been sent to save the lost sheep of Israel nor quite as the simple and provincial disciples of Jesus must have regarded those outside of the Jewish world. It could only have been one who had from childhood known other things than Judaism, other people than Jews, who could later in life have conceived of Christian salvation as something for the Jews first, until they proved stony-hearted, but from the beginning for all mankind.

But this cosmopolitanism was not to be attributed simply to the fact that Paul was a Greek in his daily contact and backgrounds for many years and that he read his Old Testament in Greek. Paul, it must be remembered, was a Roman, something that has been stressed by many English scholars who like to point out that Paul's missionary journeys were all within the bounds of the Roman Empire. Paul himself had occasion to remind those who arrested or threatened him that he was a Roman citizen.¹ It was this that gave him protection where a mere itinerant provincial might not have had it. But it gave him something more. It gave him a sense of empire, and a concept of a religion as wide as the empire in its scope. Historians like to point out that Christianity triumphed eventually throughout the whole Roman Empire. It is not too much to say that it was such a triumph that Paul, the Greek, the Jew, the Roman citizen, had in his imagination from the time when at Antioch he

¹ Acts xxii, 25.

broke with those who were trying to keep Christianity within the framework, geographical and spiritual, of Judaism.

Paul was a Jew, he was a Greek, he was a missionary, he was a dialectician. But he was something more, something that may be said to have bound together the diverse strands of his personality and training. He was a mystic. From the point of view of the interpretation here to be emphasized, this last characterization may indeed be more important than all the rest. It may be the key that explains a personality that must otherwise seem a mass of contradictions and a religious synthesis almost fantastic in its surface contradictions. The retrospective critic may select the strands in Paul, as they have been selected here, but it is not the Jew, the Greek, the Roman, nor the missionary nor the dialectician that is the determining factor. There are various analyses possible of the character of Pauline mysticism, but a consensus of scholarly opinion and indeed even a casual reading of the Epistles would make it clear to the reader that one is dealing here with a personality controlled by a vision he had once had—however one explains his having had it—and possessed by that vision for the remainder of his life. Paul himself is quite definite as to what it has done for him and what it may do for all mankind. The vision was sudden in character but permanent in influence. It gave Paul a new and immortal life, it liberated him from bondage to the Flesh and to the Law, and, as he was to come to think and to expound in the Epistle to the Romans, it was freedom

from an old and fatal life. Paul was possessed by Christ and he felt passionately that therein had come his salvation and therein might lie the salvation of all mankind. They had also, like Paul himself, only to be possessed by Christ through faith.

It will require further analysis, toward which the closing chapter will be devoted, to specify more exactly what it means to call Paul a mystic. It means at least two things. First, that Paul had had a vision of Christ. What that vision was, what speculations one may make as to its causes and its antecedents, what Paul himself understood by it, we shall almost at once examine. But Paul was a mystic in a second sense. His whole philosophy of Christianity, if one may describe a controlling intuition as a philosophy, was a variation upon the theme of the apothegm, "It is not I that live but Christ that liveth in me." The mystical Christianity of Paul, his reiteration, passionate and comprehensive, that his whole being was in Christ and Christ's whole being in his saved self, and that the same miracle might happen to any believer, is his characteristic contribution to the religious history of Western Europe and to the varieties of religious experience. It was this mystical Christianity that he preached and it was his intimate sense of it that sustained him amid controversies, perils, and ardors that would have killed others as they not infrequently depressed and frustrated Paul. To understand it we must first examine more nearly the "conversion" with which, at least to the overt consciousness of Paul, his Christianity began.

The conversion of Paul of Tarsus from a strict

Pharisee persecuting, as he was himself later to put it, the church of God, to the Christ-imbued Apostle to the Gentiles has a double interest for the student of religion. It is historically the turning point in the early fate of Christianity. Paul was not the only missionary; there were others before him, of whom Stephen, whose execution Paul is by the Book of Acts alleged to have instigated, is one. But in the conversion of Paul, Christianity found not only a genius in propaganda but a genius in depths of conviction and power of doctrinal synthesis. If one could imagine History indecisively meditating its course, in deciding on the conversion of Saul of Tarsus it was determining the transformation of a local Messianic cult into a universal religion of salvation. The conversion of Paul has the interest, in the second place, attaching to any profound and cataclysmic change in equilibrium of character, to any classic instance of a new set of motives apparently completely superseding the old. Paul's conversion is one of those decisive instances in a life and in a religion. It ranks with the conversion of St. Augustine and of Luther, though by no means identical in character with either. And it should further be mentioned that Paul treated Christianity as a *theme* of conversion; others like him might be saved by being *converted* to Christ.

The conversion of Paul has, and with reason, attracted particular attention among scholars of the history of Christianity and among those students of religion who are inclined to stress "experience" as preceding theology and indeed determinant of it. Paul's

conversion has all the fascination of a mystery and a paradox. It seems to offer a chance at once to explain him, and where it is so desired, to explain him away. Attempts are made at once to explain and embroider, as did the editor of the Book of Acts, the conversion itself, and to demonstrate by elaborate hypothesis how the sudden conversion was at all possible.

For that the conversion was sudden, there seems every reason to believe, and even the most skeptical scholars do not doubt its violence or its lack of premeditation or deliberateness on the part of Paul. Even where his vision of Christ is held to be a hallucination, that hallucination is admitted to be to all appearances sudden, and in all conscience genuine. For the authenticity of the conversion and its immediacy and urgency, we have Paul's own testimony:

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.¹

Whatever else one may say of the conversion or however one may try to go behind it, the vision of

¹ Galatians i, 13-17.

Christ is incontestable. Paul had, or imagined he had, or profoundly believed himself to have had a personal manifestation of Christ. Paul vouches for that in terms as certain as they are brief. The three accounts in the Book of Acts are more circumstantial but more dubious, since the three accounts differ in detail and apparently derive ultimately from Paul's own avowal.¹ One may discount the heavenly fall to earth, the bright light, the heavenly voice, the language used by Christ, according to the Book of Acts, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."² One may doubt, and indeed according to the best authority there is good reason for doubting, the vision that came to Ananias, a disciple of the Christ at Damascus, who is told to visit Paul, known to him as persecutor of the brethren, and is reassured, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."³ One may doubt this as well as the two speeches of Paul, the address to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and before King Agrippa.⁴ These speeches and the vision of Ananias are clearly skillful editing; they introduce appropriate dramatic detail. They are poetically true. But Paul, the most reliable testimony, says nothing of the details. He does not describe the vision on the road to Damascus, nor even specify that it was there that the vision occurred. He insists sim-

¹ Galatians i.

² Acts ix, 4, 6.

³ Acts ix, 15-16.

⁴ Acts xxii, xxvi.

ply that he has seen the risen Lord Jesus, when, as Paul says in Galatians, "it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen."¹ Again he says in I Corinthians, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"², and later, in the fifteenth chapter, in advancing his claim to be an apostle, he recounts those to whom Christ has appeared, ending with, "all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." That is all. The dramatic color the account in Acts lends to the vision, the hypotheses the modern psychologist devises to account for an apparition with such amazing consequences, are in the long run less significant than the simple fact itself, attested by Paul thus simply and with such absoluteness.

But if we cannot get behind the fact, we can at least place it in the context of the circumstances of Paul's life, and other evidence we have as to his history and his temperament. We can examine more closely what it was that Paul saw, or remained until the end of his life convinced that he saw, what in his previous biography might make him susceptible to such a vision or to the implications of it. Paul saw not Jesus in his terrestrial life and mission but Christ in his celestial glory. We can see to what that vision converted him, what it converted him from, and from what even after his conversion he remained still unconverted.

Modern studies of the psychology of conversion

¹ Galatians i, 15-16.

² I Corinthians ix, 1.

make Paul's "conversion," however signal its importance, not unique in character, neither the vision itself nor the upheaval of conduct that followed it. It is not altogether unlike the vision that occurred to so unlike a character, St. Francis, on the way to Spoleto, or the apparition of the Virgin to Ignatius Loyola. However one may discount the literary artifice and propagandist intention of the account in the Book of Acts, so intent on emphasizing Paul's new Christian zeal by emphasizing the violence of his previous persecution of the Christians, the very fact that such artifice is indulged in such emphasis is itself a kind of testimony to the fact that the vision on the way to Damascus happened to a man to whom there was precious little reason superficially to expect it might happen. Nor is it at least psychologically a miracle that the miracle should have overwhelmed him. Whether or not Paul was on an official errand of persecution of the Christians at Damascus after having officially participated in the stoning and execution of Stephen, there seems no reason to doubt that he was on his way to Damascus to root out the Christians there. There is no reason, furthermore, to doubt that as a good Jew and a good Pharisee, he had been exacerbad beyond endurance by Hellenizing Christians who had come to Jerusalem. It is by the Hellenizing Christians, those drawn from the Diaspora who had swelled the Apostolic Community, that Paul must indeed have been exasperated, rather than by the Twelve whose beliefs remained essentially Jewish.

These latter did not separate themselves from other pious Jews save in professing a belief that Jesus the Nazarene had been raised by God to the dignity of the Messiah, and that the promises were fulfilled in him. They were scrupulous in their observance of the Law and of the Temple service as indeed at first was Paul also. Paul might have regarded the Messianic faith of the Twelve as mistaken, he might indeed have regarded their faith in the Messiahship of one who had died upon the cross as wicked almost to the point of blasphemy. But his worst wrath and his most frantic indignation were not against these. In the words of M. Loisy, "However subject to caution it may be, the recital of the Book of Acts in mentioning Paul in connection with Stephen and the preparation of Hellenizing Christianity, is inspired with reality." For it was Christianity of the type preached by Stephen as represented in the Book of Acts that seemed to Paul, and not to him alone at Jerusalem, something to be extirpated. It was the Christianity of the "Grecians," who made little of the Law and almost mocked temple observances that must have outraged the heart of this strict Pharisee and pious Jew. When Paul was converted to Christianity it was to the Christianity he had been persecuting. When he was converted to Christ, it was to the Christ of the Grecians, *Kyrios Christos*, the Lord Savior, not to Jesus the living teacher or Jesus now anointed the Messiah.

What happened on the road to Damascus we have already seen. A vision of Christ in glory. But what had previously happened to Paul, that he who had gone

to Damascus to persecute the Christians should, in consequence of a vision on the way there, have on his arrival become (to the very plausible incredulity of Ananias as recounted in Acts) one of the most zealous of them? It was certainly not to Jesus as the Twelve Apostles had known him in the flesh, or to the Messiah as they believed in him after his death that Paul was converted. There is only the scantiest possibility that Paul had known Jesus, and if he did know him, he certainly makes very little of knowledge of Jesus after the flesh. "If we have known him after the Flesh, we know him so no longer." Nor is it very conceivable that he should suddenly have been convinced by a vision or by anything else that Jesus who was in the flesh and executed on the Cross was the Messiah promised to Israel. It cannot be too much insisted that in the perspective of the time crucifixion was not an honor but a disgrace.

Paul was converted to Christ risen in glory. For not only was that the Christ of the Hellenizing Christians whom he had been persecuting but (he leaves us no doubt on this point) this was the Christ whom he had seen. In speaking to the Corinthians in the first Epistle, Paul says, urging his claim as an apostle: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"¹ There is here no question of Paul's having seen Christ during his terrestrial life. By having seen Jesus Christ our Lord, Paul refers simply and exclusively to his vision of the resurrected. "But I certify you, brethren," he declares to the Gala-

¹ I Corinthians ix, 1.

tians, "that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."¹ Paul scarcely distinguishes between the revelation of Christ to him and the revelation to him of his apostleship. They are indeed for him one and the same thing. And they both occurred when Christ was revealed to him (*that* he might preach Him to the Gentiles) on the road to Damascus. It was Christ resurrected whom he had seen, who had possessed him, whom henceforth, as a consequence of that vision, he knew as a savior and felt called to preach as such.

So extraordinary a conversion has not passed without attempts at explanation, from those who have tried to explain it away as a psychological, almost a physiological aberration, to those who have made elaborate speculative hypotheses as to the preparation that must have gone on in the soul of Paul to make it possible. Paul has, of course, been seized upon as the subject of psychological and even of physiological explanations. A mirage, an excess of tropical fever, hallucination produced by heat or by hunger. Such physical explanations, especially in the case of such a critic as Renan (a classic early modern instance of the procedure), try to diminish the significance of the conversion by assigning its physiological ground. If, it is supposed, the vision of Paul on the road to Damascus can be reduced to a mere physiological aberration, the supernatural sanction and perhaps even the moral weight of his

¹ Galatians i, 11-12.

doctrine of his conversion can be impugned. But, as the very responsible French critic, M. Goguel, puts it:

The physical factors to which appeal is made, have all of them a more or less hypothetical character, and above all there is between the supposed cause and the observed effect a disproportion too great for the proposed explanation to be plausible. Even if one admits as possible—which does not seem to us for that matter to be establishable with certainty—that some physical circumstance brought about the crisis, that circumstance remains undetermined. It might have been the spark which set the powder a-fire, but is not the cause of the explosion itself.¹

The conversion of Paul can no more be explained or minimized by some dubious physical abnormality at the time it occurred, than can the whole personality and mission of Paul be explained away or rendered negligible by classifying him, on the vaguest and most hypothetical grounds, as an "abnormal." The same accusation might be leveled at any of the great "originals" of history, and attempts to explain his reference to the thorn in the flesh as epilepsy are not very well grounded, and epilepsy itself is a physical fact, not a moral judgment.

Paul has, of course, tempted both the psychiatrist and the psychological historian. In the opinion of the writer, one may neglect as fancy guesswork the more melodramatic explanations in terms of a psychoanalysis for which even those prepared to grant the highest

¹ Maurice Goguel, *Introduction au Nouveau Testament*, Tome IV, Première Partie, p. 203.

scientific value to current fashions in psychotherapy would admit we have very little data. That Paul was a megalomaniac, an accusing explanation that may be adduced in many cases of fanatic greatness, may, of course, be true. That his intemperate castigation of the vices of his age may have been influenced in no small measure by sexual repression may also have some truth. That Paul was revolting against a "father fixation" in breaking away from Judaism may have a measure of credibility. But since no contemporary psychiatrist has data for more than the most reckless guesses or the most random insights, it would seem that mere arbitrary constructions psychically retrospective (of which a few have been attempted) can carry little weight. Paul might well be the subject of a psychological poem, or psychological novel, but that is what any purely psychological explanation is bound to be.

There are more sober forms of psychological explanation which have more data at their disposal. They are those who try to explain the conversion in terms of the inner life of Paul as it is revealed in his known previous beliefs and spiritual difficulties. It goes without saying that the conversion must have had some preparation. There is too much subsequent evidence in the major epistles, for one thing, that Paul had not in his conversion broken definitely or completely with his past. For another, one need not know intimately and absolutely the biography of Paul to suppose that his case was absolutely *sui generis*. There have been other conversions and those about which we *do* know

are not, though they may be, in the overt consciousness of the converted, as was Paul's to him, a bolt from the blue. Paul explicitly, wherever he refers or may be even suspected of referring to his conversion, attributes it to an act of God which he could not resist. Time and again ¹ Paul emphasizes the "constraint" he is under to preach the Gospel, the violence with which he was apprehended by Christ. Yet the violence and the suddenness of the conversion as he realized it, and its compelling effects do not make it any the less probable that there was a preparation for it in his own psyche and his own history.

There have been a number of responsible critics who have imagined that they could map the course of that preparation, and from Paul's own writings. Recent critics ² have pointed out how completely *voulu* is the usual attempt of Protestant critics to give the history of Paul's change of heart and mind, the fever chart of his allegedly gradual—though subconscious—conversion from a persecutor of Christianity to an Apostle of Christ the Lord Savior. The conversion of Luther has been taken as the model and pattern of the conversion of Paul.³ The argument may be summarized as follows: Paul had long been an intransigent orthodox Jewish theologian. He had believed profoundly that salvation could come only through an observance strict and complete of the obligations im-

¹ Philippians iii, 12; I Corinthians xv, 8, 9, 17.

² Cf. Goguel, *op. cit.*; Alfred Loisy, *Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétien*; and Wilhelm Wrede's *Paulus*.

³ Position taken by Weinelt, Weizsäcker and most German Protestant critics.

posed by the Law. But in a long and intimate travail in his own spirit he had discovered that a complete fulfillment of the Law was impossible, and that if one were to be saved at all, it could only be through faith in the grace of God, that it was this grace vouchsafed to all, the mission of Christ, that was the revelation which came to Paul of a sudden on the road to Damascus. But the suddenness, on this hypothesis, would have been merely superficial. The preparation had been long going on secretly in the psyche of Paul in a torment which had two facets. It is conceivable and picturesque to suppose that the teachings of the disciples of Jesus had long had a secret attraction for Paul; the gospel they preached and the manner of their life had impressed him.¹ In persecuting the Christians, he was trying to repress a secret longing in his own soul and an unavowed, and according to his lights and principles and traditions an unavowable, temptation to join them. Hate is, according to current psychiatry, a circuitous and fascinated form of love, and it is in itself fascinating to play with the speculation that Paul in furiously persecuting the Christians was persecuting his own subconscious. Such things have happened since then in religious and in moral history, the attempt to drown secret longings in the fanatical scourging of those who fulfill those longings for themselves. But tempting as is such a modern-sounding psychiatric speculation, there is little support for it in the text. "Nothing," as M. Goguel puts it, "gives us authority to suspect the perfect good faith of Paul the perse-

¹ Cf. Goguel, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

cutor. The testimony which he renders himself when he speaks of the first period of his life, is characteristic. He presents his past attitude as an error and not as a crime. Would he have spoken thus, if his conscience had reproached him with having persecuted the Christians, without being sure that they were wrong?"¹ It is, of course, possible that after his conversion Paul should altogether have forgotten the history of the divided soul which he had been. But from his own statements and from the corroboration that even a discounted acceptance of the recital in Acts gives, there is little reason to believe that Paul did not in all conscience believe he was doing the work of God in persecuting those whom he was so soon to call the Church of God. There is, indeed, little reason to question or to be in the least surprised at the moral energy with which Paul pursued and condemned the Christians prior to his conversion. There was every reason for him to be scandalized by them. The disciples were preaching as the Messiah a madman who had perished at the hands of the Roman authorities. Jesus had died accursed by God and man; his death on the Cross proved it. Paul himself recalls the verse of Deuteronomy, to the Galatians, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."² "It was an overwhelming blasphemy of which they rendered themselves guilty, who saw in this accursed one the Son of God, the Messiah promised to Israel."³

¹ Goguel, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

² Galatians iii, 13; Deuteronomy xxi, 23.

³ Goguel, *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 184.

A second favorite and on the surface plausible explanation of Paul's conversion has some support, as we shall see, in the Epistle to the Romans, though a support rendered questionable on several important grounds. There is a facile and logical attractiveness in the suggestion that Paul had long suffered either from a sense of the insufficiency of a merely legal "justice" before God such as Pharisaic Judaism conceived, or from a sense that the individual was doomed because he could not, with all the scrupulous good will in the world achieve that absolute perfection in observance of the Law by which alone he could appear just before God. The hypothesis, for as M. Loisy says,¹ "it is nothing but a hypothesis," is entirely gratuitous. Paul gives no reason to suppose in the first place that he had ever, previous to his vision of Christ, regarded the guarantee of salvation provided by the Law, according to the teachings of the Pharisees, as insufficient. It was precisely because he did think it was sufficient that he not only persecuted the Christians but, born apostle that he was, that he tried to convert the Gentiles to legalistic Judaism.² It is not too much to say that before his conversion the notion that justice through conformity to the Law was inadequate had not entered his head. The Epistle to the Romans is always invoked, especially the famous seventh chapter, in support of Paul's conception of the inadequacy of merely legal Jewish "justice," and the impossibility of man's fulfilling the obligations of the Law that would render him just. But there is here, as has been

¹ Cf. Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

² See Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

repeatedly pointed out, an error of turning an exposition, rhetorical in form and theological in content, into a piece of spiritual autobiography. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"¹ is commonly taken to be a personal cry of anguish. "For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Paul is in these words frequently represented as having long before his conversion been tormented by the insufficiency of the law as a way of salvation, and the impossibility of fulfilling such a way, such as it was. But there is no good reason for interpreting the Epistle to the Romans as a piece of autobiography; and certainly not as relevant to the conversion; there is not a single word referring to the conversion in the whole epistle. And there is every reason for thinking the famous first person confessional-sounding quarrel between the flesh and the spirit in the seventh chapter of Romans is a rhetorical device of a homiletical exposition. It suggests, but only by its form, the really autobiographical chapters of St. Augustine describing his tormented and ambivalent state before his conversion. Paul in Romans is teaching a doctrine of an already fairly developed theological point of view. Even if one were to find at least implicit autobiography in it, in M. Goguel's telling phrase, "the conscience of a rabbi would be seen across the experience of a Christian."²

¹ Romans vii, 24.

² Goguel, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

Paul certainly was not, so far as the Epistles reveal, in any anguish of spirit concerning the Law before the vision of Christ glorified appeared to him. He tells the Philippians, so far as legal justice was concerned, he was irreproachable.¹ It may, of course, be possible that in Paul's subconscious there was a searching for another "justice" than that provided for and required by the Law, that he was in some recess of his being tormented by the insufficiency of any merely carnal man attaining the perfection demanded by the Law or any human possibility of fulfilling all the scrupulosities of the divine command. Unless one is prepared to accept, quite without question, a divine source and a supernatural miracle as the source of Paul's vision and its transforming effect upon him, one must presume some anterior preparation in his own psychological history. But that preparation must be a speculative reconstruction; there is no warrant for the supposition, so far as the utterances of Paul himself are concerned, that he had any awareness of some straining toward Christianity, or some sense of some inadequacy of his Pharisaic faith before that vision. The latter came to him, indeed, not as a relief long longed for, a resolution of difficulties long brooded upon, but as a violent upsetting and a new, however glorious, constraint. It would, doubtless, be of the highest interest, both psychologically and historically, to know what brought on a vision that like any other psychological crisis must have been the explosion, the meeting of many forces long murmuring in Paul's psyche and meeting

¹ Philippians iii, 6.

suddenly and with cataclysmic effect on his external career and on his conscious mind. But it is far less easy to divine that history than to study what the crisis to Paul seemed to be, and what consequences it had in his life and thought. For such considerations the evidence, though controversial enough, is more abundant, and the inferences to be drawn more credible and clear.

The conversion of Paul reduces itself to a vision and to a command, made no less real whether the explanation be called psychological or supernatural. From the previous discussion it ought at least to be a thesis worthy of consideration that the psychological explanations advanced have no less the character of an explanatory myth than Paul's simple assertion that God had chosen to reveal his Son to and in Paul that the latter might preach him to the Gentiles. The most skeptical historian and the most faithful theologian are in agreement at least on one fact, that Paul, to all intents and purposes, did see Christ, saw him at once living and glorified, saw that vision as a revelation of the Son of God, and conceived that vision as a command to proselytize. That vision on the road to Damascus is Paul's essential "religious experience." The theme of that experience becomes the ground work of his thinking and his preaching. For, as will be developed in the sequel, to Paul the vision was not simply something seen but something intimately lived. In seeing Christ, he was possessed. "That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ

Jesus," says Paul to the Philippians.¹ Christ was revealed, he tells the Galatians, "in [*not to*] me."² The vision of Christ in glory on the road to Damascus was not simply a miraculous vision beheld; it was a divinity experienced. In seeing Christ, Paul felt that he had become one with him, or rather that the divinity of Christ had flooded his own being, and the being of Christ had animated and transformed his own. It was no longer he that lived, but Christ that lived in him. It was peculiarly this theme³ that Paul was to make the central substance of his teaching, for it was the central theme of his own religious experience. The vision of Christ continued to possess his life and imagination and with it the sense that the being of Christ, since that vision, dwelt controllingly in him and, equally important, that the same miracle might happen to others through an act of faith. Each believer might have his own vision, and effects precisely identical with those that Paul was to teach would be effected in him, the infusion of a new life, the lapse of the old motives of the flesh and the old obligations of the law, the "liberty" and the "new life" of the indwelling Christ.

The implications of the vision Paul did not, of course, see at once full blown. He was to bring to the mystical sense of Christ's being, as animating and filling his own, all the resources of the rabbinic dialectic and the allegorizing skill, the Jewish history and eschatology, of which the vision had not robbed him.

¹ Philippians iii, 12.

² Galatians i, 15-16.

³ See Chapter V.

It would be false to treat Paul's conversion as a form of amnesia. For though Paul was converted to Christ in glory, there is much in Judaism from which, even in the most developed form of his Christian thinking and feeling, he never departed. To set Paul's Jewish and Christian thinking over against each other is to misunderstand the character of both and their inextricable intermingling. Faith in Christ as Savior as substitute for salvation through the Law was certainly a radical break with Judaism. But the exposition of the meaning and operation of that salvation remained inescapably in a framework of traditional Judaism, in both methods and materials. However he re-interpreted it, whatever new meaning he gave to traditional passages in the Old Testament, Paul, even long after his conversion, regarded the Old Testament as the supreme authority. For was not Christ promised in the Old Testament? And however much Paul transformed the simple Messianic teaching of the Twelve, those Messianic teachings remained the framework in which the mission of Christ was set, and that mission itself, as we shall see the Epistle to the Romans make clear, has no meaning save in terms of that story of first and last things as given in history and prophecy in the Old Testament. Christ was the fulfillment of the alliance of God with Abraham, and salvation through faith in and identification with Christ had a meaning only in terms of the corruption of the divine nature of the first man. It was the Fall of Man in Adam that made intelligible the necessity for the second Adam (Paul's own phrase in Romans). Paul never deserted the

monotheism of his Jewish heritage. It is too often forgotten that speculations on the Trinity were foreign to Paul, and though Christ is the Son of God, and hence divine, Christ is not God, he is God's mediator. There is evidence, and indeed evidence may be cited to the contrary in Paul,¹ that Paul would have found quite foreign any blanket identification of Christ with God. His letters also exhibit, as Guignebert points out,² "a stock of ideas upon human nature, sin, the relation between sin and death, all of which are as rabbinical as the dialectic in which he clothes them."

There are two large and controlling ideas in Paul, moreover, that, whatever he may do to them as a Christian, were inescapably determined by his Jewish training. One of these is the Law itself. If one may suspect that Paul was haunted by Christianity before his conversion, one has reason for much more than suspicion that he continued to remain haunted by the Law after he became an Apostle of Christ. In the very act of preaching freedom from the Law in Romans, he still cannot escape it, indeed he insists upon its sacrosanct character. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."³ Paul has in Romans a gloss upon the Law he could not have uttered while he was a Pharisee. He demotes the Law simply to a tutelary function; it served to define sin, to make clear the sinful nature of man. But he never for a moment doubted its divine origin, and in the very

¹ Cf. Romans, *e.g.*, viii, 17; I Corinthians xv, 28.

² Charles Guignebert, *Christianity, Past and Present*, English trans., pp. 79-80.

³ Romans vii, 12.

midst of counseling reliance on Christ alone as the mediator of salvation, his conception of law and sin remain deeply Jewish in character. The nature of sin and the flesh and their essential relation, and the inescapable relation between sin and death are also, to whatever purpose Paul uses them, Jewish in origin. And finally the whole eschatological setting, the eager expectation of an imminent Last Judgment, which hovered like a terrifying cloud over all Paul's theology, was a Jewish heritage, which John, and Jesus too, had preached, without for a moment departing from a language familiar to Jews and formulas essentially Jewish in character.

Paul was never converted from Judaism completely. To the very end he insisted that the Jews were the natural branches cut off from the olive tree.¹ Paul believed to the last that he was preaching the promise made to Israel, even when he had made of his teaching a doctrine that was a new and autonomous religion, in no way consonant with Judaism and recognized very early by the Jews to be in contradiction with it. Paul hoped as late as the Epistle to the Romans that the Jews might yet be grafted again into what he thought was the essential stream of the Jewish faith. He cannot believe, even where to modern eyes he is preaching a doctrine clearly destined to be a radical break with Judaism, that he is preaching a new faith. "I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his

¹ Romans xi, 24.

people which he foreknew.”¹ There is probably no more decisive point in the history of Western religious history than the quarrel at Antioch between Paul and those Christians who wished to keep in the bounds of the Jewish law, and who wished to preach primarily to those of the Jewish faith.² Paul, by a kind of shrewdness of instinct, knew that to meet the religious aspirations of the Roman world, he must break with a narrowly provincial and a narrowly legalistic Judaism. But he tried to convert the Gentiles with instruments derived from rabbinical method and Jewish history, and in starting Christianity on its separate career, he gives, time and again, signs of having remained in his own eyes, as he remains in the structure of his thinking, Jewish.

We have examined now the circumstances of Paul's conversion, the nature of that Christ to whom he was converted, the things from which he remained either expressly and by choice or implicitly and by inevitable training and habit of mind, unconverted. We shall have to consider all these elements in more detail, and to see how even out of the strong residual elements of Judaism in his thought and feeling, Paul contrived to make a mystical faith radically un-Jewish in theme and in destiny.

It remains in this first general discussion to try to come to grips with Paul, to see *de tout près*, if it is possible, below the Greek, the Jew, the missionary, the rabbi, the dialectician and the mystic, what sort of man or personality was Paul, born Saul, of Tarsus. The

¹ Romans xi, 1-2.

² Cf. Galatians ii.

personality of Paul has itself become fixed in the general imagination in terms of his missionary journeys. This is in part a tribute to Luke, the probable author of at least those closing portions of the Book of Acts which deal with Paul's dramatic and perilous attempts to convert the whole world of his time. It has become a conventional stereotype, especially among the conventionally anti-clerical or anti-religious, to make of Paul a fanatic, forbidding, uncompromising, and unattractive. As to his actual appearance we can, of course, say practically nothing. There are no busts or pictures of him. There is no mention of him in contemporary literature.¹ It is again a fallacy of retrospection by which we imagine Paul well known to his contemporaries. "Who at that time in the official world had taken any note of the obscure traveling preacher? The Christ-cult was in the time of Paul a secret affair of humble unknown people in the back streets of the great Mediterranean cities."² The faith of Christ, says Paul in Romans,³ was known throughout the whole world. One may be privileged to doubt it. It was widely but obscurely spread. We can simply, with some reservation, follow the tradition, supported by Paul's sparse references to himself, that makes him small of stature, and near-sighted, that he was subject to bodily weakness, though one may dismiss as purely speculative the whole library of literature as to what his weakness of the flesh was.

There is a portrait given of him in the apocryphal

¹ Cf. Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³ Romans i, 8.

² Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

Acts of the Apostles, small, dark, bald-headed, vigorous, but that we have any actual physical portrait of Paul is extremely questionable. But questionable as may be the evidence at our disposal, it is impossible not to try to form some image of the temperament of the man himself. That he was subject to some recurrent disease, psychical as well as physical, he repeatedly testifies.¹ The guesses as to what that disease was have varied from epilepsy to chronic indigestion and leprosy, and all the guesses have been contested by supporters of rival hypotheses. Paul himself establishes a relation fairly direct between his visions and his sufferings, but it is not that of a vision as a symptom of his disease. The divine vision comes to him rather as a kind of explanation that might in some degree mitigate his sufferings:

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.²

One must with considerable caution, therefore, attribute Paul's visions, including the central and decisive one on the road to Damascus, as being caused by a disease as to which one can at most guess. It is quite clear, though not specifically clear enough to sat-

¹ Galatians iv, 13; I Thessalonians ii, 18; II Corinthians i, 8-11.

² II Corinthians xii, 7-9.

isfy a practicing psychiatrist, that Paul was of a nervous temperament predisposed to visions.¹ But as a number of modern critics have pointed out, the social situation of that time and the uneasy psychical state of many persons reared in an atmosphere where miracles were less rare and when they happened subject to no such critical judgments as in ages where notions of mechanical cause and effect are as familiar as they are to us, predisposed many to hallucinations. From the evidence at our disposal, we can simply and cautiously affirm that Paul was subject to some chronic but unspecified ailment, that he was extremely impressionable, subject to crises of excitement and of rapture and (one has but to read the Epistle to the Corinthians) subject also to moments of morbid depression. It would be easy on the face of such evidence as there is, to classify him as a manic depressive,² always remembering that he was a manic depressive of extraordinary genius. But at the same time that it is necessary to recognize bodily weaknesses and nervous instabilities, attested by his own words, it is only just and it is equally important to note the extraordinary accomplishments of this troubled, physically weak man in his incredibly energetic life. He had endured stoning, five times he had received thirty-nine stripes, he had three times been beaten with rods. He had suffered hunger, frost, thirst, and shipwreck, and had frequently been arrested.³ And in point of mere physical

¹ Goguel, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

² His relations with the Church at Corinth are marked by extraordinary oscillations between enthusiasm and depression.

³ II Corinthians xi, 25-27.

endurance for a sick man, his travels in the modern world would have been astonishing. Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Rome, he had braved not only the opposition of enemies Jewish and Gentile, but the physical hardships of one of the most astonishing missionary journeys of the world.

If there has been any single trait of Paul that has become fixed in the mind of the modern liberal imagination, it is that of the fanatic. He has given support to this emphasis by his own emphasis upon his persecution of the "Church of God," and by the intolerance and indeed vituperation with which, for example in Galatians, he speaks of rival preachers, the zeal with which in Corinthians he scolds the backsliding Corinthians. It is easy to accuse of delusions of grandeur one who could say,

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.¹

It is not impossible to accuse of monomania one who could spend so much of the second Epistle to the Corinthians justifying the fact that "in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles."² There is some evidence, surely, that plays into the hands of those who would convict Paul of a narrow and provincial intolerance and an ethics compounded of an unenlightened

¹ Galatians i, 6-8.

² II Corinthians xii, 11.

asceticism; for he does truly castigate the Corinthians and bewail their falling from grace:

For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.¹

"Be not deceived," he writes in I Corinthians, "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you."²

It has so long been the fashion to revile Paul himself for his insistence on the authority of his preaching and for his own revilings that a word or two is demanded in explanation of both. Paul has been accused of being a self-intoxicated evangelist and small-town moralizer. Paul was imbued with a sense of grandeur, but it was of the grandeur of the gospel he was preaching and the divinity of its source. He says truly enough, "in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles," but he adds at once, "though I be nothing."³ It was of the "exceeding greatness of the revelations," not the exceeding greatness of himself, that Paul was

¹ II Corinthians xii, 20-21.

³ II Corinthians xii, 11.

² I Corinthians vi, 9-11.

convinced. And that conviction was for him a mystical absorption, as of something by which he was mystically possessed. When he warns the Corinthians not to be misled by false Apostles, he really thinks they are false, and that their preachings are a perversion which imperil the salvation of his flock. From the moment of the vision on the road to Damascus, he believed himself to "have the mind of Christ."¹ But to have "the mind of Christ" was for Paul to be inflamed with the sense of his indwelling life. It was to that saving sense of that indwelling presence that he struggled to bring both Gentiles and Jews.

As for his ascetic moralizings, it has been said repeatedly in modern criticism, and with an undeniable measure of truth, that Paul condemned with severity many things which to the Greeks would have seemed neither sin nor foolishness, and bequeathed to the Western world a heritage which formed the least liberal portions of Calvinist and of Methodist morality. Paul cannot be acquitted of having identified the flesh with evil, and sex with wickedness. One may give whatever psychological or psychopathic explanations one may care to that intolerance, but it is important to qualify any such explanations, at once speculative and condemnatory, with the context of such Pauline moralizings in his own mind and his own world. It is as absurd as it is ungenerous and unhistorical to accuse Paul of having been obsessed with sex, normal or perverted, by a subconscious attraction to both. Two facts are highly important in this connection; the first is that

¹ I Corinthians ii, 16.

many other writers beside Paul, many of them pagan, were shocked by the extraordinary moral laxness and decadence of the times in the Græco-Roman world. The second is that the position around which all Paul's moral judgments revolve is: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."¹ For better or for worse, the body of the believer was for Paul an incarnation of the spirit. Purity was not a merely moral but a spiritual fact. The believer must, like Christ himself, die to the flesh, that he might live immortally in the spirit. The origin of this, to modern minds, extraordinary position demands further exposition; its roots lie in Paul's own conversion, but its formulas lie in a whole view of the world bound up at once with his Jewish moral heritage and his sense of the meaning of the Greek mysteries. But it is in the light of a profoundly felt and (before his life was concluded) profoundly considered doctrine that Paul condemns the flesh *in toto*, as well as the decadent vices of his time. Paul was not a pagan, classic and happy. But he has his own considered reasons for seeking happiness in another direction, which was in a life of the spirit, which any fleshly indulgence might corrupt. The Kingdom of God was at hand, and if it was fanaticism to insist that the spirit at that juncture mattered more than the lusts of the flesh, it was a fanaticism that was intelligible and meaningful, and had its own generousities.

¹ I Corinthians iii, 16-17.

Paul's intemperance of zeal might have been intensified by his sense of the imminence of the end of the world and the imminence of the Kingdom. But his antinomy of flesh and spirit is dependent on his metaphysical mysticism, half Jewish and half Greek, rather than on his doctrine of history and of the future, of first and last things, almost completely Jewish in its source. Paul felt that Christ had infused into him a new life, which transcended the motives and the operations of the old. To believe in Christ was to become a member of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit, too, had its fruits, directly antithetical to those of the flesh. The classic passage in Paul's ethical attitude is perhaps best revealed in Galatians:

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other. . . . Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.¹

¹ Galatians v, 16-24.

Those of the mystical body of Christ were to have risen through faith and love into a new life that was compacted of pure spirit. In that spirit all believers were mystically one. To follow the "lusts of the flesh" was at once to corrupt the spirit and to betray the mystic community of all believers. Paul's ethical fanaticism was the function of his twin mystical sense, that faith constituted the initiation into a life of spirit, and that in the life of spirit all men were one. It is from the standpoint of that mysticism, at once a Platonic metaphysics and a religious "mystery," that Paul's intolerances must be understood. To believe in Christ was to escape the corruptions of the flesh and to live in the spirit and to share its fruits thus enumerated by Paul in Galatians. His was the morality of another and perhaps imaginary world, but it was one he passionately believed. He condemned the flesh that the spirit might live. And no one can read the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians on charity without realizing how generous and moving was the life of the Spirit which Paul exhorted his hearers to live.

PAUL AND JUDAISM

IN the preceding chapter it was pointed out that one of the strands in the complex personality of Paul, born Saul, of Tarsus, and one of the circumstances that determined his doctrine was the fact that he was born and bred a Jew. It is no exaggeration to say that in one sense the fact that Paul was a Jew and that he never quite ceased to be one is one of the most decisive single facts about him. It may well have been the Greek in his thinking and environment that made it possible to frame a message that would be intelligible to the Gentile world. But it was the Judaism in his inheritance and early education that fixed the framework within which his revolutionary teaching was set. Even his radical break with Judaism and his ultimate condemnation of the Law were made in terms that would have been possible only to a Jew. It must be first noted what various things are implied by calling him a Jew.

The evidence of the Epistles and the testimony (with however much reserve one accepts it) of the Book of Acts makes it clear that Paul was a Jew in the fullest sense of the word. Paul himself boasts of his Jewish descent, and is proud of the fact that he was a Pharisee and the son of Pharisees.¹ There may be doubt that he studied at the feet of Gamaliel, and if he did, it is

¹ Philippians iii, 5; Acts xxvi, 5.

not quite clear which Gamaliel it was or who Gamaliel was. But there is plenty of evidence that Paul had the strictest training as a Jew, that he did pass his formative years studying at Jerusalem, that he knew the Old Testament, albeit in Greek, and continued to the end to regard it as authoritative revelation. Also that he was a good Pharisee, and that, even after his conversion, he continued to have a special concern for his own people. Nor is there very much question that for all his insistence on the sole and exclusive importance of faith and his denial of the very basis of Judaism, the Law, he hoped, as the concluding chapters of Romans make clear, that the Jews would recognize in his doctrine the truth of Judaism, too long obscured and now manifest by the death of Christ, the *vrai vérité* made clear, and through him, Paul, at last revealed.

First as to Paul's Jewish birth and family. Paul was born, beyond doubt, at the beginning of the Christian era, at Tarsus in Cilicia. Even his adversaries did not question his Jewish nationality. His parents appear to have been Roman citizens, from which it is generally inferred that they were socially and economically well off.¹ Though his family was apparently a Greek-speaking one in a Roman city, it appeared to have close relations with Jerusalem and to have remained closely attached to Judaism. The family boasted being of pure race and of the tribe of Benjamin. Despite the testimony of Acts,² "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee," it is doubtful whether

¹ Goguel, *op. cit.*, Tome IV, Première Partie.

² Acts xxiii, 6.

Paul's family was really of the Pharisaic sect, for the atmosphere of life according to the rigorous principles of Pharisaism was hardly possible in the Diaspora. It is much more likely that Paul's Pharisaism was an acquired characteristic to be attributed to the impression made upon him by his teachers in Jerusalem. But that his parents were zealous Jews is attested by the fact that from the age certainly of fifteen and possibly of thirteen, Paul was sent to Jerusalem to receive a rabbinical education.

It should be further observed, however, that while Paul's family were apparently devoted Jews, they were Jews of the Diaspora, which meant that they were, if we are to judge by evidence of other Jews in the Greek-speaking world, notably Josephus and Philo, partly "assimilated." Paul himself knew the Old Testament first and chiefly in Greek, and both in susceptibility to Greek ideas and in relation to the strictest requirements of Jewish orthodox legalism, he like other Greek Jews was to be distinguished in temper and habits from the pious Jews in Jerusalem. Both of these facts go far toward explaining Paul's adaptation of his ideas, both before and after his conversion, to those current in the Greek-speaking world, and they indicate how he could have insisted upon concessions to the Gentiles that to even the Jewish Christians of Palestine seemed impossible and blasphemous.

But it is in Paul's education rather than in his family that are to be found the Jewish determinants and the permanent and paramount Jewish pattern of his thinking and feeling. His family background indeed may

be said to be important for the fact that Paul, though a Jew, was a Jew of Tarsus, a Jew qualified by a Greek environment. In so far as he was a Jew in emotion and certainly in thought, one has to look to the fact that by education he became a Jew of Jerusalem. "He was educated," in the language of Guignebert, "to a high standard of the Jewish culture of those days, which regarded the profound study of the [Jewish] Scriptures as the one thing needful."¹

If Paul's family were only nominally Pharisees, Paul was at Jerusalem more than nominally such. The Pharisaism in which he was so intransigent was not that described by Josephus, a philosophy interested in problems of predestination and the will; though this, too, clearly left its traces upon Paul. (There is nothing else so plausibly to account for his doctrine of election in Romans.) The Pharisaism with which he was involved, concerned itself primarily with a due observance of the Law. It needs hardly to be repeated by now that the Pharisees have suffered unjustly in their reputation because of the tradition of Christian apologists, instigated by the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. The notion of the Pharisees as strict legalists in theory and hypocrites in fact is both unfortunate and unhistorical. If the first accusation is to be leveled at anyone, it should be rather against the Sadducees who by insisting on a literal fulfillment of the Law "made it impossible and thoroughly unattractive, with the result that no one except the priests

¹ Guignebert, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

at Jerusalem could attempt to observe it.”¹ The Pharisees were possibilists rather than legalists, and by collecting the traditions of the elders and distinguishing among obligations, sought to make it possible for a religious Jew to acquit himself of his responsibilities to the Law. That there were hypocrites among the Pharisees and literalists, too, there can be no question. The rabbis themselves distinguished seven varieties of Pharisee. But the Pharisees were, as a group, enlightened and sincere, and that Paul acted sincerely according to Pharisaic lights, there can be little question.

Before coming to a consideration of the major themes upon which Paul's Jewish mind played, even after he had broken away from even Judaizing Christianity, there are some further aspects of his Jewish education that require notation. The Bible was Paul's central religious book; indeed, in some quarters, it is held to be the only book with which he was at first hand thoroughly acquainted. He not only knew its contents, but knew how and was disposed to treat it according to the rabbinical fashion of his time. He turned to Christian uses the familiar rabbinical habits of allegory and interpretation and dialectic. The mission of Christ was prefigured in God's covenant with Abraham. Moreover, it is extremely important that whatever transformation Paul's conception of Christ might have introduced into the Jewish doctrine of first and last things, it was that doctrine of first and last

¹ F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *Life of St. Paul*, p. 79.

things which was deeply embedded in Paul's thought.¹ The history of the world was Jewish history, as represented in the Scriptures, and the future of the world was to be found in the prefigurements and prophecies of an anointed who was to deliver Israel from its calamities. It is true that Paul read into that history much that was not there by the letter, but so did the rabbis. It is true that he modified his conception of the Future, so that no pious Jew could consistently accept the version. Paul's Christ was not a human being anointed by God to be a savior of the Jewish people; he was a divine being, destined from all eternity to save not only the Jews but all mankind, or at least the elect, from among all kinds and conditions of men. It is true that faith in Christ was to supersede the Law, not, as in Jesus' own conception and that of the immediate disciples, to fulfill it. But the Messianic elements fix the pattern of the Pauline conception of Jesus, and the Law, though abrogated, remains, in a fashion tortured and complex to be sure, Paul's inspiration.

For, though it was Christ crucified and faith in him by which Paul was preoccupied, it was the God and the Law of the Jews in the matrix of which that preoccupation was fixed.

Paul remained a Jew, then, first in his conception of God. There is a tendency to read later theological speculations back into Paul himself, and to forget that trinitarian speculations and the subtleties of later Christologies are not Paul's, and, under the circum-

¹ A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, p. 20.

stances of his education, could not have been his. If Paul accepted the Old Testament as the revelation of God, it is also true that he accepted the God of Judaism. Christ is the Son of God and is a divine being, but he is not God himself, and Paul indeed envisages a time when Christ will turn over his delegated power to God himself. Christ is the divine intermediary between God and Man. But God himself remains, as he was for Judaism, the sole and universal God. Paul was deeply grounded and to the end deeply attached to that Hebrew theism which F. J. Foakes-Jackson has admirably described in the following terms:

The ancient religion as it appears in the Old Testament was in its highest or prophetic aspect the worship of the God of Israel Who stood preëminently for righteousness.

Paul time and again gives evidence, so far as the Book of Acts is to be trusted, of his sense of the central importance of one god. He congratulates the Athenians upon their being philosophers in worshipping not idols, but one god. Jesus' reign will come but it will give place ultimately to the reign of God. "Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."¹

Paul, like any other pious Jew and, given his ardors and fanaticism, more than most, believed not simply in one God, but that God had revealed himself expressly to the Jewish People in one Law. Nobody could have pleaded so eloquently for an abrogation of

¹ I Corinthians xv, 28.

the Law, who did not understand the hold it had upon him. Again to quote Professor Foakes-Jackson:

As has been indicated the Law, far from being regarded as an intolerable burden, was the pride and the glory of the Jewish people. They actually loved it for all the severe demands made upon them. It is true that it never was nor is easy to be a strict observer of the Jewish Law. It meant isolation from the world, constant religious observances, and no common self-denial. But when habits have been instilled into a people for generations, when they are recognized as the chief means for maintaining their nationality, when their customs have been perpetuated by the heroic deeds of their ancestors, above all when they were believed to be due to the will of the God Who had so wonderfully preserved Israel in the past as His own People, it was natural that the Law should be regarded with enthusiastic affection, and that even those who were lax in observing it should reverence those who performed all its precepts. These found a special pride and joy in fulfilling them. We cannot understand Paul without taking into account his early enthusiasm and that of his countrymen for the Law.¹

For what and in what did this early enthusiasm of Paul consist? The Law itself was the will of God, and, so all good Jews and particularly all good Pharisees believed, in observance lay the salvation of Israel and of individuals in Israel. It is true that the prophets thought of Israel as a whole, and spoke of national shortcomings and rewards and punishments for the nation. But by the time of Paul observance of the Law had become a matter of individual conscience and

¹ Foakes-Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

individual salvation as well. Salvation meant sharing in a transfigured Israel on a transformed earth, in entering the Kingdom of God to be ushered in by the Messiah. Up to his conversion Paul overtly and consciously had a thoroughly Jewish enthusiasm for the Law as the will of God, for the redemption it promised. After the conversion, the imminence of the Kingdom still remained for him a central fact, and, however transfigured his Messiah, Christ still served the Messianic function; his second coming would usher in the Kingdom, and that second coming was to be soon.

However un-Jewish the faith in Christ and the mystery of salvation through him, Paul may rightly be considered as being before and in essence after his conversion, something not unlike a Jewish prophet. He accepted the revelation of the Law as God's will, as "holy and just and good." "Do we then," he asks in Romans, "make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."¹ But it was precisely because of the way he felt, as a strict Jew, toward the Law, that, paradoxically enough, he, having seen another way to salvation, rejected it. Paul's own attitude toward the Law can be understood partly in the terms of the Jewish scholar, C. G. Montefiore:

Do all Israelites observe the Law? Do they fulfill the injunction of this perfect code? And is not God very angry with them if they transgress any of these excellent precepts, whether moral or ceremonial? It is undoubtedly true that they do not all observe the

¹ Romans iii, 31.

Law, on the contrary, all, more or less fail to fulfill its injunctions. And doubtless God is very angry. A few hardened and special sinners violate the injunctions of the Law in open revolt and mockery and wickedness. But the enormous mass of persons violate them through weakness, through the solicitations and temptations of the Evil Inclination, through the attractions of base desire, or through any other form of human frailty. Is not then the whole scheme of things, the entire religious system, broken through and broken down? Where is God's glory? Where is man's satisfaction? Both depend upon the keeping of the Law, and the Law cannot be kept. Theoretically, no doubt, the Law might be a joy. So it would be in fact, if it could be observed. But the Law itself declares that man is accursed unless he observe the whole Law, that is *all* its enactments. To observe all the enactments, both positive and negative, would mean that a man would be sinless, whereas it is notorious that all men sin. If one has violated the Law by breaking one of its enactments, and thus by a single transgression become guilty and "accursed," how can the whole thing be other than a frightful burden, a constant and gnawing anxiety? The issues are tremendous—life eternal (to say nothing of earthly happiness) is at stake—the chances of success are infinitesimal. . . . Instead of a privilege, it is a burden; instead of a joy, it is sorrow and gloom; instead of leading to sanctification and life, it leads to iniquity and death.¹

Mr. Montefiore explains that rabbinic Judaism was never obsessed by such morbidities, and that if Paul was thus obsessed he came by it through other than

¹ C. G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul*, pp. 37-40.

rabbinic sources, from a poorer Judaism of the Diaspora. But whatever the sources of Paul's pessimism with regard to the possibility of fulfilling the Law, two things should be noted. He was certainly not troubled by any such pessimism, at least consciously, before his conversion. And after his conversion, he sought and, to his own satisfaction, found within Judaism itself the grounds and implements of his despair of the Law. For if Paul counseled salvation through faith in Christ alone, through whom sin was abolished, it was by way of a conviction, whose sources lay in Judaism, that the Law itself inevitably led to and emphasized the fact of sin and flesh and death. And his notions on these matters were Jewish in character, however Greek and unprecedentedly Christian may have been the solutions he found to the grave problems they raised.

Paul believed, after his conversion, that through faith in Christ crucified and only thereby could man be saved from the corruption and native doom of the flesh, made manifest by the Law of Israel which man, in his own sinful nature, could never fulfill. But his sense of the meaning of the Law, of sin, of flesh and of the fatal relations between them were in no small part his Jewish heritage; he might, as he did, transform the latter; he could not escape it. He might be converted to Christ, but quarrel though he did with the "Judaizers," his own Christianity had irreducible Jewish features in it.

Of the Law, even when he is attacking it, Paul speaks as only a Jew could have spoken of it: "Behold,

thou art called a Jew, and resteth in the law, and maketh thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law . . . which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.”¹ Even in the Epistle to the Romans, where he is launching his elaborate and uncompromising argument for the liberty of Christ as over against the bondage of the Law, he can still speak of the special prerogative of the Jew:

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.²

For the implications he drew that the Law was but a period of tutelage, a device for making sin manifest until Christ should be born, we have to turn in other directions than Judaism to find the materials on which Paul drew. But, as a Jew or as a Christian, Paul conceived the Law itself in definitely Jewish terms.

Paul's identification of Flesh with Sin and Sin with Death cannot be so easily said to be purely Jewish in character. Certainly there was in the Judaism of his day no such pessimistic dualism as is involved in Paul's treatment of the Flesh as contrasted with Spirit. Paul's Pharisaic teachers could not have said, as he does, "for I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."³ Paul uses the term "flesh" in many senses; sometimes simply for the body,⁴ some-

¹ Romans ii, 17-20.

² Romans iii, 1-3.

³ Romans vii, 18.

⁴ I Corinthians xv, 50.

times for the whole person.¹ But chiefly he uses it to describe human nature as such, and so used, the word with him has a moral and religious significance. Flesh, unregenerate human nature, is evil; its lusts and desires are the expression of its own sinful nature. Sin may be unconscious among the heathen, though there is a "law written in their hearts."² But this natural sinfulness becomes active sin or willful transgression as soon as man comes to a realization of the Law. And it is the Mosaic law to which Paul refers, that Law which is at once the embodiment of God's will and of the moral sense of mankind.

Paul's sense of the flesh as identical with radical evil is to be attributed far more to his affinities with and borrowings from Greek thought than from the Hebrew tradition. And so, too, is his conception of deliverance from the flesh. Both will be dealt with at greater length in connection with Paul's mystical synthesis, which constitutes his special contribution to Christianity. But there are two respects in which his conception of sin and his notion of the flesh are obviously Jewish, namely with respect to their natural history. Man is sinful because Adam sinned, and his flesh is evil because of Adam's transgression. From whatever Græco-Oriental sources Paul drew his sharp dualism between flesh and spirit, the anthropological setting in him of sin and flesh, their status in the world are expounded in terms of Jewish history. "By one man

¹ Romans ii, 28. (See on this point A. C. McGiffert's *The Apostolic Age*, p. 123.)

² Romans ii, 15.

death entered into the world, and death by sin.”¹ If man is to be saved through Christ, yet it is the sin of Adam through which man’s nature was corrupted, and by virtue of which the symmetry of that salvation is required. Again, though the faith of Christ frees man from the Law, the Law itself was an education toward Christ. It made sin manifest in the world. The very essence of Paul’s Christian teaching could not have been expressed, as it is in the Epistle to the Romans, if Paul had not taken over with complete conviction the Jewish history of Adam and the Fall, and read into that history the anticipation of Christ.

Nor are even these teachings of Paul, thought to be distinctively Christian, other than transformations, however radical, of essentially Jewish ideas familiar to Paul long before his conversion. It is a commonplace of Pauline studies that the Christ mysticism of Paul and the Pauline notion of salvation through the risen Christ, are radically different in kind from the simple Messianism of John the Baptist, probably of Jesus himself and of the disciples after the crucifixion. On several counts the differences are clearly enormous. The Messianic hope so often current and so often frustrated in Israel was that of a human being, come in anointed triumph, sent by God to deliver Israel from the yoke of its oppressors. The Messiah should lead God’s chosen people to victory and rule in the consummated Kingdom. During the century preceding the birth of Christ, the conception of a Messiah was widespread, the expectancy of his arrival common, and the

¹ Romans v, 12.

arising of pretended Messiahs frequent. But the Messiah was generally regarded and looked forward to as being human though anointed by God, the Kingdom that he was to usher in was an earthly Paradise. There are occasional indications that the Messiah is thought to preëxist,¹ but he is seldom held to be divine. In the case of the disciples, Jesus is simply identified as the Messiah. The "stumbling block of the Cross" is circumvented by insistence on the fact of his resurrection, and his speedy return is the Messianic hope now only a little deferred. "Of the Pauline conception that he had returned to the glory which was originally his, we have no hint in these early records."²

It was not the Anointed whom Paul preached, but the son of God, himself divine, come as a sacrifice and a vicarious atonement. It was to sharing Jesus' own spirituality, in a bodiless world and as pure spirit, that the Christian might look forward. But there are clear Messianic features that remain in Paul's thinking and expectation. It is still the Kingdom at hand, though it is the Kingdom of Christ, not of God; and though the savior and redeemer is now divine and no longer merely a divine messenger, he is still a savior; and, as the Epistle to the Romans makes clear, however stony-hearted the Jews may be, it is the Jews, too, that he had come to save. If the savior-god, dead and come to life again, was, as we have reason to believe, intelligible chiefly to Gentiles, it was probably the Messianic character attributed by the Twelve to Jesus that

¹ Micah v, 2.

² McGiffert, note, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

first made Jesus intelligible, though at first hateful, to Paul.

Paul's faith is often described as a timeless and mystical identification with a timeless divinity of Christ, and, as we shall have occasion to observe, justly so described. But it is important to remember also that his mysticism and his Christ both had an eschatological setting.¹ It was framed in a theory of first and of last things that was familiar to Paul long before he saw the vision on the road to Damascus. Messiahs had been familiar to Jews for generations.

But it is more than the elements of his teaching that Paul took from Judaism and kept long after Damascus. He remained deeply Jewish in his feeling. He had inherited his worship of God from his fathers.² "Paul," in the words of Deissmann, "never departed from the national and religious communion of his people; he retained with pride the name Hebrew, and the even more significant names Israelite and Seed of Abraham, just as he also certainly reckoned himself one of the Israel of God."³ He speaks of Jews in the wilderness as Fathers and Forefathers, and to boast of Father Abraham and Father Isaac comes natural to him. He calls even the unbelieving Jews "brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh,"⁴ and he would willingly himself have received the curse if he could

¹ Albert Schweitzer seems to have exaggerated the eschatological emphasis in Paul, but has done well to recall its importance.

² II Timothy i, 5.

³ Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁴ Romans ix, 3.

thereby have saved them.¹ As an apostle he continued to observe the hallowed customs of his own people.² He refers to the Jews as superiors, as a metropolitan might refer to his fellows in addressing provincials, "We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles."³ He makes the celebrated metaphor in the Epistle to the Romans⁴ that the Jews had been cut off—and might be restored to—the olive tree, to which the heathen, the branch of wild olive, had been grafted. He cannot believe that God has cast away his own people :

Blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Even after he has abjured the Law and insisted on faith in Christ and that faith alone as salvation, he still talks as a Jew longing that his fellow Jews may be saved, and still thinks of his gospel in terms of a deliverer come to save Israel.

That he departed, and was aware he departed, in fundamental and irretrievable respects from Judaism, is clear, though Paul never seems to have realized how decisive were the implications of that departure. For it is to be questioned whether in "opening a door to the Gentiles," he thought he was doing an essentially un-Jewish thing.

Proselytizing was unknown to traditional Judaism. Paul was a Jew, but he was a Greek Jew, and he had

¹ Romans ix, 3.

² I Corinthians ix, 20.

³ Galatians ii, 15.

⁴ Romans xi, 17 ff.

doubtless seen in Tarsus what could be seen in any town in the Diaspora, Gentile proselytes to Judaism, either half or complete converts. For Judaism was calculated on many grounds to appeal to the Gentiles. It was free from the crudities of ambiguous polytheism, and the ascetic discipline imposed by its Law, its ceremonial and moral obligations, seemed to put the Jew in a class apart. And about its very ritual there was the appeal, not to be minimized among the cultured population of the Mediterranean world, of what must have seemed to many pagans a magic singularly simple, efficacious and pure. There are scholars who believe that at Jerusalem Paul had been the hope of the Hellenist party and that before he became a Christian, Paul himself had hopes of converting that Gentile world which he knew so well to that Judaism to which he was attached so dearly. That very proselytizing then of the Gentiles which made him so invaluable a spreader of his teaching of Christ-crucified was itself a habit he had acquired while a Jew. And the instruments he might have used to persuade Gentiles to Judaism he used after his conversion to persuade them to Christianity. It is a significant fact that he never tried, or was never conscious of trying, to draw Jews away from Judaism, even when he was telling them that the Law was bondage and that Christ alone could make them free.

He remained a Jew in his use of the Bible, which he relied on as an authoritative document, as indeed he ascribed special merit to his own people for having received it. The great place held by his Biblical piety

in the religious psyche of Paul is evidenced, for one thing, in the vast number of quotations from the Old Testament in his letters. It is evident again in the exegesis he bestows upon them, and Paul uses, with less reservation than the phrase as used by the Jesus of the Gospels, the phrase, "It is written," in the sense of a supporting authority. Then again he allegorized and used the text of the Scripture in a large and free sense as the basis of ideas that could not possibly have been intended by the text.

In an age when inspiration was construed on a legal basis with mechanical literalism, allegorical exegesis was the only means open to prophetic and creative minds of escaping the grip of the letter; and with Philo as also with Paul, allegorical exegesis, however paradoxical this may sound, was more a sign of freedom than of bondage, though it led both of them to great violence of interpretation.¹

The parallel between Sarah and Hagar and the two Covenants,² the identification of the rock that gave water in the wilderness with the Spiritual Christ,³ the whole habit of dialectical argument, and indeed its special instruments, are in Paul typically rabbinic. The proof from analogy, the argument, much used by rabbis, from simple to complex,⁴ the use of parallels, as the parallel between Adam and Christ in Romans,⁵ are the typical and peculiar method of the trained rabbi.

¹ Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

² Galatians iv, 22 ff.

⁴ *E.g.*, Romans xi, 12-24.

³ I Corinthians x, 4.

⁵ *Cf.* Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 101-103.

Nor was it only in feeling and the framework of ideas that Paul remained Jewish. He used, naturally and of necessity, the institutional forms of Judaism, and found in the synagogues, universal in Judaism by his time, at once a natural platform for his preaching and the audience to which he first naturally turned to preach. The synagogue formed the model and the origin of the church of Paul. Even if the account in Acts is to be taken with serious reservation, the uniformity of Paul's method as there recounted, his invariably preaching in the synagogue first when he visited a city, is an important indication. It justifies the suspicion that Paul, even after he became a follower of Christ, thought first of preaching to his own people, and did not doubt that he was preaching to them a doctrine within the frame of their own traditional religion and aspirations.

In his idea of God, which remained that of the Prophetic Jewish tradition, in his doctrine of first and last things, in his missionary zeal, in his use of the Law and his reverence for it even while attacking it, in his solicitude for the Jewish people and his permanent sense of near and special kinship with it—in all these things Paul was and continued all his life to be a Jew. The question then naturally arises how a Jew, intense and intolerant as Paul was, should, almost, one may rather say completely, without realizing it, have framed a religious synthesis that meant an absolute break with Judaism. How should he have come to teach a way of salvation that excluded the continuance of Jewish

piety and interpreted the latter as an obstruction to salvation?

The explanation begins to be found, I believe, first in the fact that Paul, though a Jew, was a Jew of the Diaspora. That accounts, as has already been suggested in the previous chapter, in the first place for his familiarity with ideas of the Græco-Roman world and with the temper of those Gentiles to whom he was to preach his gospel. It suggests how, moreover, whatever may have been his enduring solicitude for the Jews, the Gentiles should have entered his head at all, and that he should so easily and completely have regarded himself as an Apostle specifically to the latter. It accounts for the fact that he could become a Greek to the Greeks, when necessary, that he could come to see even his own strict Judaism in a wider context, and a transformed one. Mr. C. G. Montefiore calls needed attention to the fact that though Paul was a strict and Pharisaical Jew, there were elements in his Judaism, both temperamental and theological, that were variant, differences from even that Judaism of which he was, prior to his conversion, at least in his overt consciousness, so ardent and uncompromising a protagonist, and after his conversion still so concerned. Righteousness through conformity with the Law—Paul had scarcely to step outside of Judaism or outside of the Pharisaic sect to hear about that. But, as Mr. Montefiore points out, though Paul fancied himself perfectly orthodox, "his religion was frequently not in all respects the religion of Rabbinic Jews. It often seems to have differed from it in those very points

which constitute the essence and bloom of a religion, different less in dogma than in attitude, less in creed than in outlook and in emotion.”¹ Though it is dangerous to read back a picture of the Rabbinic Jew from evidence several centuries later, as Mr. Montefiore admits he does, one may accept with caution his view of the Rabbinic Jew from whom Paul in temper and emphasis, though not in external practice, differed even before his conversion. The concept of and the feeling for “righteousness” which Paul had, came from Rabbinic Judaism. Mr. Montefiore is convinced, as I am also, that the emphasis he placed upon sin and indeed his very conception of its nature was non-rabbinic in character. If it was Jewish at all, it was that Judaism of the Diaspora, profoundly modified by its Græco-Oriental religious environment. Paul could not, according to the point of view and evidence cited by Montefiore, have possibly taken sin so soberly as he does, had he been simply a Palestinian rabbi of his day. Even where Paul gives evidence of his respect for the Law, he lacks altogether “the joy of the commandments—that simple happiness in performing any particular injunction of the Law—[which] seems to be a special and peculiar feature of Rabbinic Judaism.”² Repentance and sin had faded into the background. “The average and decent-living Israelite would inherit the world to come, would be ‘saved’ . . . God’s love for Israel, His inveterate tendency to forgiveness, together with the merits of the patri-

¹ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

² Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

archs, would amply make up for . . . individual deficiencies. Their religion was, therefore, happy and hopeful: happy in the performance, within the limits of human frailty, of the divine commands in this world, hopeful in the belief of the sure inheritance hereafter of the finer and purer beatitudes of the world to come.”¹ The rabbis could speak of God’s great anger, but they could say by the same token that a man had but “to repent a very little and God would forgive very much.” The Law was a joy, the believer in God had but to do his best in fulfilling his commandments and his failures would not be held against him. The Law was the delighted preoccupation of the believing and pious Jew, though to the very pious in the Diaspora the problem of keeping the Law in an alien society might well have been a problem. But sin was not, as it seems to be in Paul, his obsession.

Paul learned about righteousness from his rabbinical training. Where did he learn to be so gloomily convinced of his own utter sinfulness and that of all mankind? Where did he learn to have, in so un-Jewish a fashion, so horrified a moral contempt for the flesh, to make so despairing an identity between the flesh and sin? Mr. Montfiore says he received it from a “cold and somber” Hellenistic Judaism. There is not much evidence that the Palestinian Jews, even those most concerned with the Righteousness of God, were desperately troubled over the sinfulness of man. They were not sick souls, and one may even say that essen-

¹ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37.

tially Paul was not. It is questionable, as has been pointed out, how autobiographical is that famous chapter in the Epistle to the Romans where he canvasses the quarrel between flesh and spirit, and asks to be delivered from the "body of this death." But Paul was a sick soul in his conception of the flesh in which he found no good thing. He was a sick soul in the sense that he did not think that he in his and of his own nature and in a natural world could be assured salvation. The general lineaments of that world view in which flesh and spirit are so sharply divided and flesh is condemned were derived from an atmosphere rather different than that current among the rabbis of Jerusalem. The "amazing expedient and terrific catastrophe" was the death of the Son of God on the Cross. Only a Greek imagination tintured with Greek religion of the late Greek world could have conceived of this expedient. Paul's relation to that world we shall have occasion to examine in a later chapter.

Meanwhile one must turn to one phase of Paul's conception of salvation that clearly has its roots in Judaism, namely Paul's eschatology. Paul expected the Kingdom of God and in his own way, in a way in which Christ became the central character, faith in Christ the certificate of entrance. But the expectation itself was a Jewish heritage, and the general temper and framework of it had a long Jewish history. In the popular imagination of the Jews of the time there was, of course, a "confused welter of anticipation," and the Kingdom of God announced by John

the Baptist and by Jesus was itself a fever of hope by the time of Paul. But the fever had a natural history. "The pre-Exilic and Exilic prophets expect a Messiah of David's line to come as the God-anointed Ruler, endowed with wisdom and power, to rule the Great Kingdom of Peace which was to form the consummation of world history."¹ He is to usher in an earthly Paradise which is, however, an earth transfigured. The Messiah is a real scion of the House of David, who is given supernatural powers by God. "The partakers of the Kingdom are men whom God enables to survive the tribulations with which He sifts the nations and on whom He bestows existence long beyond all conception and full of joy, by granting them to live amid a 'nature' which fulfills all their needs."² There are traces of this expectation in Isaiah. Later the idea of the Kingdom emphasizes less and indeed almost forgets the Messiah, and stresses the Kingdom of God in which God is to rule directly. There are traces of this eschatology without a Messiah in the Book of Malachi written about 400 B.C., and in Isaiah, written about 300 B.C. But the most developed form of this Messiah-less Kingdom is the Book of Daniel, with which, through the intermediacy of his rabbinic education, Paul was undoubtedly familiar. The Kingdom is ruled over by the Son of Man, an angelic Being who has the appearance of a human. In the period of tribulation preceding the earlier prophets it was a means designed by God to

¹ Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

² A. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 76, and generally chapters IV and V.

sift out his people. Thereby the name of God is to be spread abroad and his glory revealed among the heathen. In Daniel there is a transformation; the period just before the Kingdom of God is the epoch when the powers opposed to God fight their last battle, wreak their rage against the saints and enable them to prove their loyalty to God and that they belong to the Kingdom of God. In Daniel enters the idea, for the first time clearly, of the Resurrection of the Dead.

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.¹

The two eschatological conceptions, that of the Messianic kingdom and that of the Kingdom of God in which all the generations of the dead shall be resurrected, exist side by side, for the older conception was strongly revived in the first century B.C., particularly under the influence of a book composed about 63 B.C., called the *Psalms of Solomon*. But Paul's own conception is possibly best to be understood in terms of the Apocalypses of Baruch and Azra, an attempt at

¹ Daniel xii, 1-3.

reconciliation of the Messianic idea and the idea of the Kingdom, a reconciliation of the Eschatology of the Prophets and that of the Book of Daniel. Despite minor differences, the course of events at the "times of the End" is more or less as follows: There is a time of tribulation before the Messianic Kingdom, in which those who are elect to that Kingdom remain alive. The Messiah appears. He judges upon all survivors, and those who are found not worthy of the Messianic Kingdom are condemned to death. The Messianic Kingdom comes to an end, and the Messiah returns to Heaven. There is a resurrection of the dead, of all generations and Last Judgment upon them by God, eternal blessedness in the Kingdom of God, or eternal torment.¹

There is fair agreement among scholars that this picture of the times of the End, current among the scribes of his day, was in the background of Paul's consciousness, and of his doctrine. The coming of the Messianic Kingdom he took seriously, literally and expectantly. It did not seem to him very remote. The resurrection of the dead of all generations he took for granted and in terms borrowed largely from these and similar Apocalyptic writings.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.²

¹ Cf. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

² I Corinthians xv, 51-52.

The background and the terms of Paul's eschatology thus are largely those of his Jewish inheritance. Neither the Messiah nor the Son of Man, between which two conceptions he oscillates, are novel in him. They both have, as we have seen, a long Jewish history. But Paul turns them to his own uses and gives them a mystical import that must be sought in non-Jewish sources. For, "behold," he says in the passage just quoted from I Corinthians, "I shew you a mystery." But the mystery is Greek, not Jewish, and its Greek sources we shall soon examine. In the present connection, it is important to see the way in which Paul's conceptions definitely broke and contravened the import of the Jewish eschatology that remained vivid and literal with him to the end. Christ ushers in the Messianic Kingdom, but Christ is now more than the Son of Man. He is the Son of God. Paul found no anticipation of that in Jewish eschatology, and it could only mean blasphemy to the Jews. There was nothing in any of the current doctrines of Last Things to account for or give a rationale of the fact that the Messiah, the Son of Man, or, as Paul conceived him, the Son of God, would or could be crucified. Did not the Law itself say that he who was hanged or nailed upon a cross was accursed? Paul had to account for the fact that the Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, had come, and having come had been crucified. And he could only account for it in a way that marked his break with the very eschatological tradition whose framework he continued to use. Christ's death and resurrection became for him the deliberately intended

way of salvation. Christ's death was to release man from precisely that burden of the Law which identified the crucified as accursed and that corruption of sin which was made evident by the Law:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.¹

But that very Law is now abrogated; the death of Christ annuls the Law. The death of Christ and his resurrection have a mystical meaning, not provided in any previous Hebrew doctrine. Their significance as the instrument of salvation makes the Messianic Kingdom mystically already at hand. The times of the End are already mystically present to those who through faith die and live again with Christ, die to the flesh and live again in the spirit.

That mystical identification with the death and resurrection of Christ transforms Paul's doctrine of last things from the literal expectation of Christ's return in glory to a present faith in his mystical presence to the believer. But such a belief, whose examination must be momentarily postponed, brings us back again to the Law. For it is that very death of Christ which for Paul ends the reign of Law over existence and over the hearts of men. The Kingdom is established by the faith of the believer, and by his identification with the dying and risen Christ. Paul borrows his doctrine of Last Things from Judaism and he quotes the Law. But the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection

¹ Galatians iii, 13.

transforms the Kingdom from a temporal expectation to a faith in the presence of eternity and an absorption in it. It transforms the Law from its eternal validity to a temporal stage in the evolution of the salvation of mankind.

We are enabled by taking Christ crucified as the center of Paul's faith, as he himself takes it, to understand more closely now how it was that one to whom the Law continued to mean so much, and to whom the Jewish picture of first and last things continued to mark the contours of his thinking, could none the less call the Law accursed and change the outlook of first and last things so that their import became that of the experience of eternity through spirituality, instead of the participation in the flesh in a glorified earth. Paul announced to the Galatians that he preached nothing but Christ crucified and faith in Christ. It is hard to say how long he had been nourishing the zeal of a missionary even before his conversion. It is absolutely certain that after his conversion he wished that salvation through Christ to be available to all mankind, Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian, slave or free. He saw with uncompromising clarity that so long as the Christian proselyte felt he had to pass through the gateway of the Jewish Law, so long as the Jew felt that salvation lay within the possibility of observance of the Law, the gospel of Christ would be impossible to the Gentiles and blasphemous to the Jews. To the Jews he had to reduce the Law to a secondary position and often worse. To the Gentile, he had to insist firmly that not only was

it unnecessary to observe the Jewish Law, but that to observe it was an obstacle to salvation and a negation of faith in Christ, through which faith alone salvation could come.

The famous quarrel with the Judaizers in the Epistle to the Galatians becomes, seen in this light, something more than a trivial quarrel over a forgotten ritual issue. The whole issue of Christianity as an autonomous religion may be said to have hinged on the position Paul there took with respect to the Law. The quarrel at Antioch with the Judaizing Christians was joined on a real issue. If Paul had yielded, he would have yielded more than a point with respect to the observance of ritual. He would in essence have remained a Jew, however novel a one, and encouraged his followers to remain Jews. By his taking sharp issue with respect to observance of the Jewish Law, he accomplished, perhaps far better than he knew, the founding of a new and separate religion. He insisted that Christ and faith in him was all that mattered. He proclaimed the end of the reign of the Jewish Law, which henceforth he was to think of as bondage, and the beginning of the liberty of Christ. Paul by insisting on what seems a merely formal point, namely the absolution of the Christian from obedience to the Jewish Law, is definitely transforming the conception of Christ from that of a Messiah come to deliver the Jews to that of a universal savior come to save all mankind. He is freeing his conception of Christ and faith from that "particularism" to which, as Mr.

Montefiore points out, rabbinical Judaism was especially subject.

When a Jew believed in Jesus as the Messiah and probably looked for Him to return almost immediately, he would not naturally feel that he was free of all obligation to observe the Law. On the contrary, accepting it as he did, as the revelation of God's will, he would be more disposed to obey its precepts. . . .¹

But Paul and other Hellenistic Jews had found in preaching to Hellenistic communities much opposition from the Jews, and the Gentiles enthusiastic. Henceforth, they announced, they would turn to the Gentiles. Paul in preaching to the Gentiles, made the discovery that it was not the Jewish Christianity of the Twelve, really little more than a Messianic cult, that would henceforth be Christianity, but a religion primarily of Gentiles, free of all servitude to the Law, free to be possessed completely by faith in Christ and by Christ himself.

For it must be remembered that it was not only to the Jews to whom the spread of Paul's teaching was anathema. "There was evidently a section of Jewish believers in Jesus to whom Paul's teaching was as distasteful as it was to orthodox Jews."² These were the people, mostly connected with the church, practically a synagogue, at Jerusalem. When Paul had established himself and his doctrine in Galatia, the Jewish party from Jerusalem had sent emissaries urging and insisting that all Christians be circumcised. They

¹ Foakes-Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

² Foakes-Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

tried to persuade the new converts that if they would really follow Jesus, their master, they must, like the Master, observe the Law. It was averred inconsistent to accept him as the Messiah and yet not accept the Law of Israel. "There be some," Paul tells the Galatians, "that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."¹ To conform to Judaism is to accept a different Gospel from that preached by Paul. As an Apostle with a direct commission from Jesus Christ, Paul calls upon the Galatians to pay attention only to the one thing needful, faith in Christ.

The agreement was that Paul was to preach to the Gentiles, Peter to the Jews. Peter came to Antioch, to preach his Judaizing Christianity. Paul contested his insistence on circumcision, asking him: "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"² The friends of James, the brother of Jesus, insisted that the proselytes become circumcised and be full members of the nation of Israelites. Thus alone, they held, would there be possible communion with the original disciples of the Master. Paul states the principle of his autonomous Christianity after his rebuke to Peter for withdrawing from the Gentiles after the Judaizers had arrived from Jerusalem:

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by

¹ Galatians i, 7.

² Galatians ii, 14.

the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? . . . The just shall live by faith, and the Law is not of faith.¹

The mystery of Christ living in the believer, the principle that only faith in that life could guarantee salvation, made Paul, for all his persistent Jewish language and his adroit dialectical use of his Jewish heritage, the founder of a new religion. But, though he did found such a new religion, it remained for him within the framework of the tradition of the one he had left; the salvation of his fellow Jews continued to be his special pre-occupation, the history of his race persisted as the source of his deepest attachments and was used indeed as part of the explanation of salvation itself; and finally, the Law of his people continued to hold and dominate the imagination of the Jew who as a Christian was to preach that Christ had superseded the Law.

¹ Galatians ii, 19-21; iii, 1, 11-12.

JESUS AND PAUL

PAUL was a Jew; Paul was a Greek; Paul was a follower of Jesus. We have already seen how difficult it is to say precisely what was meant by the first two statements. Each of them must be crossed by many qualifications. The third is even more complicated. Who was the Jesus that Paul followed? In what sense did he follow him? Was it the Galilean teacher Paul taught and believed in, whom, after his conversion, he felt to be living in him? Was it the leader of the Apostles whom Paul cherished? Was it, perhaps (and here we come to an alternative much esteemed among recent scholars) not Jesus at all whom Paul followed, but a glorified and eternal Christ who had little or nothing to do historically with the humble Galilean.

The orthodox story is, of course, simple. Paul, born Saul of Tarsus, on the way to Damascus saw the vision of the Redeemer in glory, and was converted to the truth of that divine son of God whom the other Apostles had long acknowledged and whose very acknowledgment had provoked Paul's intransigent persecutions of the Christians. According to the orthodox story, Paul had suddenly come, through the vision of Christ that had been revealed to him, to the same belief in Christ that the Galileans shared. The facts, in the light of contemporary scholarship, seem otherwise.

He came to a belief in Christ that the other Apostles could not even have conceived.

Again in what sense did Paul *follow* Jesus? Is there, we are led in the light of contemporary inquiry to ask, reason rather to say that in terms of subsequent history, the Christ who came to be the center of Christian belief *followed* Paul, was a consequence of the Pauline synthesis rather than preceded its formation? From this point of view, which has the support of a great deal of contemporary scholarship, the Christ of Christian belief, though it had its sources and its materials in the Christ of the synoptic Gospels, was—it is scarcely too much to say so—an invention of Paul, a synthesis made by Paul of a Jewish story, an Apostolic tradition, and the formulas and promises of a mystery religion, fused in the ardent mystical temperament of the Apostle to the Gentiles. When it is said as it sometimes is, with a rhetorical flourish, that Paul, not Jesus, is the founder of Christianity, it is clear what is meant. The phrase is a dramatic way of insisting on what the available facts seem to confirm, that Jesus did *not* found a religion of which he was the central object of worship, of faith and of adoration; he did *not* found, in the sense of instituting, a religion in which he should be the self-acknowledged instrument of the salvation of all mankind. All apparent evidences in the Gospels that he did do so seem rather to be later editorial additions that the very situation of Jesus, his antecedents, and the perspective of his Jewish hopes could not have envisioned. He did not found the Christianity Paul preached, and if Chris-

tianity be the vision of Paul and Paulinism, then Paul was clearly its founder.

Yet it is not for nothing that even the emancipated look askance a little when it is said that Paul is the founder of Christianity. For the Christianity that Paul founded is so deeply involved in his conception of, his feeling for, and his interpretation of Jesus Christ, that to speak of even Pauline Christianity without a consideration of the part Jesus played in it is to speak of a conception of Christianity that is not Paul's at all.

It is not easy, as has been supposed of late, to separate Christ resurrected from the human Jesus of whom Christ was an eternal transcript. One accomplishes more than Paul did if one thinks one can quite separate the eternal Divine Savior with whom the believer becomes one from the leader of the Apostles. It is true that Paul speaks of Christ more than he speaks of Jesus, and it is, as he constantly reminds us, not Christ after the flesh whom he knew. The Christ he knew was Christ Eternal, Christ the Spirit, the Christ whose divinity one might assimilate, and who came to Paul in a vision. But there are three respects at least in which the Jesus of history, in the flesh and more or less as represented in the Gospels, have shaped the Pauline faith.

For all that it is true, in the first place, that Paul did not know Jesus, there are evidences throughout the Epistles that the tradition of the life and character of Jesus were alive in him. The shadow of the history and influence of Jesus' personality went into the

mystical character of the eternal essence, the metaphysical divinity, which Christ becomes in Paul's thinking. Paul is silent, it is true on the ministry of Jesus, but he is silent rather as one is silent on what is already familiar to the hearer, the reader, and the writer. There were other missionaries than Paul, even to the Gentiles, and the story of Jesus was widely known. Paul evidently knew much of the human life and character of Jesus. It is no metaphysical substance but a living being whom Paul has in mind when he says that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.¹ The character of Christ, the living Jesus as portrayed in the first three Gospels, are familiar enough to Paul. When Paul enumerates the effects of the spirit of Christ on the life of the believer, the *cause* of the effect lies in the mystical transformation of character through the identification of the believer with Christ. But the effects are those identical with the values preached by Jesus and cherished by the Apostles. "If," F. J. Foakes-Jackson remarks in his *Life of St. Paul*,² "the author of the Third Gospel and the Acts was known to Paul, he cannot have been ignorant of the life of Jesus."

In the second place, whatever be the explanation and the natural history of the conversion of Paul, it was the repercussion of the propaganda by the Apostles and by the early Hellenizing Christians, it was the influence of those who had known Jesus in the flesh that first stirred Paul's exacerbated interest in

¹ Galatians v, 22.

² P. 289.

and opposition to Christianity. If Jesus had never been a living influence on a band of devoted, however simple and local followers, Paul would never, so to put it, have had Christianity enter his head at all. Paul did indeed transform the living Jesus into the immortal Christ. But it was the living Jesus who was the initiation of the process, and the image of him in his heart that saved Christ from being a pure abstraction in the mind of Paul. His mysticism may have a touch of Greek metaphysics, but his love of Christ has behind it a heritage of the devotion of the other Apostles to a human leader.

In the third place, the history of Paul's own gradual separation of the religion of Christ from the cult of Jesus has its origin in his battle with those Judaizers who tried to keep the framework of Christian belief within the terms of the Galilean life and legend. The quarrel at Antioch was a quarrel between those who followed Jesus in the flesh and as observing Jews, and Paul who wished to escape the limitations of that semi-Jewish faith, who wished to substitute faith in Christ immortal for the Law, and faith in Christ resurrected for attachment to the literal details of his living history.

To understand more precisely the relation of the Pauline faith in Christ to the Apostolic following of Jesus, that Apostolic faith must first be recalled. To understand that, one must comprehend first Jesus' own faith, which, as it appears to the historian rather than to the theologian or the poetizing liberal, like Renan, has been excellently defined by Loisy:

The Gospel of Jesus, in so far as one has been permitted to judge of it, was in the heart of Judaism nothing but an enthusiastic movement, associated with a very pure ideal of social justice and of private morality. That justice and that morality had the same enthusiastic character as the hope [of the Kingdom of God or the Good Time coming]. There was reflected in it, in a soul elevated and simple, in a spirit without culture, in a generous heart, the inextinguishable hope, the passion for the just and good, which had been in the prophets, with, in addition, the nuance of confident and tender piety, which had been that of the Psalmists. The Gospel of Jesus was a product of Judaism.¹

It is, of course, almost impossible to define Jesus' conception of his own mission quite in his own terms. For the terms which we use as his own are those of the Gospels; and the Gospels, later and editorialized versions of Jesus' sayings and hopes, are, it cannot be too insistently emphasized, documents later than the Epistles of Paul. Yet with whatever caution we take the documents, there is general agreement among contemporary scholars that they do reflect with remarkable fidelity, even in their ambiguities and confusions, what must have been the animating faith of Jesus himself. The picture of the Galilean preacher of repentance and of the Kingdom, of simplicity and of purity of heart as well as of action, as given in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (the Gospel of John is another and highly Platonized matter), is, on the whole, the historical Jesus. The Jesus it reveals to us is

¹ Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

a Jewish Jesus, the whole framework of whose teaching is bounded by the hope in, the belief in the imminence of the Kingdom of God, whose moral teachings were largely, as has of late been abundantly made clear,¹ as were his faith and belief in the Kingdom of God, a Jewish heritage.

Just as Paul felt the impress of Jesus, and had the whole color and contour of his teaching determined by his impression of him, so, in a different manner (for Jesus never worshiped him), Jesus' ministry was shaped by his contact with John the Baptist. The exact relations between Jesus and John are not quite clear; Matthew and Luke differ from Mark, their source, especially in denying that Jesus had ever been baptized by John. But the spiritual effect of John upon Jesus is not very difficult to discern. Jesus, like everyone else, had heard of the preaching, teaching and baptism of John the hermit, who lived in the Jordan Valley on such food as he could find in the wilds. John taught repentance, a change of heart and of way of life. John baptized his "converts," but it is not at all clear that the baptism was regarded as having a sacramental effect, or that it was regarded as initiating the followers of John into a new religion or a new society. Rather the effect of John's teaching was that of an impressive ascetic convinced that to enter the Kingdom, when it came, a change of heart and a change of life were necessary. John made a profound impression on many. What is most important for our purposes, he made a profound impression on Jesus.

¹ Cf. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*.

For John Baptism was a sign that the End was near, nearer far than John himself might have supposed. The imminence of the End of Things, the arrival of the Kingdom of God wrought a profound change in Jesus' conception of his mission. Jesus did not invent the conception of the Kingdom of God; his originality, in point of view of eschatology, is his announcement of its speedy arrival. It was within less than three years that Jesus was to sense that in some special way he was connected with the arrival of that Kingdom, not simply as its special herald, but through his own death, as the instrument of its coming. But the determinant fact of his teaching, and a determinant to play a large part, too, in Paul, was his sense of the speedy and inevitable arrival of the Kingdom. Those were Jesus' good tidings.

Only by such a realization can one quite understand the new tone and the new accent which Jesus gave to ethical ideas and, indeed, to explicit sayings, perfectly familiar to Jewish tradition. Beautiful and elevated though be the themes and sayings of the Sermon on the Mount, they cannot be lifted out of their context. The Sermon on the Mount has come to be treated as if it were delivered as an abstract homiletical generalization to a timeless audience in all ages. In so far as the sayings of Jesus are general ethical maxims, they are scarcely his own.¹ They are his own by virtue of the context in which he used them, and the personal stamp of authenticity with which he spoke them. These were no longer mere scraps of tradition. Jesus spoke

¹ Cf. Klausner, *op. cit.*

as one having authority. Part of his authoritativeness came from the personal contagion, amounting to a poetic and communicative genius, with which Jesus delivered them. The multitudes whom Jesus addressed were certainly not multitudes as we would name such today. But those who heard him, especially his immediate disciples, heard him as one speaking with a special impressiveness. He was not speaking out of rote or out of learning. He was speaking out of himself, and that self was immediately convincing; he needed no learning nor ecclesiastical support or sanction. This it was, undoubtedly, that more than anything else embittered his theological enemies, for his teachings themselves were scarcely novelties in Judaism.

The second source of originality of Jesus' teaching lies in the urgency with which Jesus preached his moral doctrines, if one can speak of such simple and homely counsel as considered theses. The Kingdom of God was at hand; that was the thing to remember and that Jesus remembered. If he spoke as one having authority who had none, and thus offended the ecclesiastical authorities, he spoke in a tone that was calculated to offend the political authorities as well. The Kingdom of God was to succeed, and at once, to the Kingdoms of this world. Jesus could counsel the rendering to Cæsar that which was Cæsar's because he did not doubt that Cæsar's power would not last very long. Jesus was not laying down precepts for eternity. He was uttering maxims with respect to this world as one who firmly believed and was gladly announcing to his disciples and to the multitudes that

this world was not to last much longer. The things of this transient world do not matter; your treasure lies in Heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break in and steal. And that incorruptible treasure will be yours shortly. And a very short time it was to be indeed. Consider the lilies of the field; take no thought for the morrow. Give us this day our daily bread. The innocence and simplicity of Jesus' teaching are, for all their familiarity, enormously moving. But they were meant more literally and specifically than taken out of their context they could possibly mean. The sayings of Jesus were, as he uttered them, in all conscience, practical enough. They were the urgent recommendations of preparation for a day that was at hand. The Kingdom of God comes to mean something timeless, mystical and eternal in Paul. They are temporal, immediate and practical in Jesus. The Kingdom of God was to come and at once. Jesus was, as John had been, its special herald, though he came to think of himself as its special instrument. But Jesus never doubted that in that Kingdom God was to rule. Neither for that matter did Paul. But he gave Jesus a station in that Kingdom, and gave that Kingdom a status, a timelessness that Jesus himself could not have uttered, and certainly never understood. Meanwhile it goes without saying that for all the local expectation and the urgency of this "interim ethics" of Jesus, Jesus, like any other genius in religion, transcended the limits of his own generation and his own intellectual landscape. He spoke, as all geniuses in religion have spoken, more

deeply than perhaps he knew. Especially is this true with reference to his insistence on sincerity as over against outward observance, of simplicity and wholeness of heart. The imminence of the Kingdom involved a brotherhood, as Tolstoy was later to insist, of mankind. We are all children, and the supreme command is to love one another. Paul's ethics and those of Jesus have, for all their divergences, this deeply in common.

It is hard to trace, so controversial are the alleged facts and the evidences for them, the steps by which Jesus came to think of himself as having a special relation, and a definitely divine vocation with respect to the coming of the Kingdom. It is clear that he had increasingly such an awareness and that it was this which prompted him to go up to Jerusalem accompanied by a band of his immediate companions and disciples, closer than those whom Mark calls the crowd. If it is impossible to determine how, none the less it is clear that Jesus did come to think of himself as having a Messianic mission. At first he merely announced, on the way to Jerusalem he certainly came to believe, that his going to Jerusalem would in some way hasten his end, and there is in his forebodings the night before the Crucifixion a suggestion that he conceived his death might be necessary as a prelude to the coming of the Kingdom. Did he think of himself as the Messiah? It is not possible to answer unequivocally. On the Cross itself he is credited with having suffered in addition to the physical agony the equal agony of a sense of utter failure and humilia-

tion: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." In Aramaic the words are, "why hast thou shamed me." But there is evidence also that it was was not quite out of the consciousness of Jesus to have regarded himself as the Messiah who should himself return to usher in the Kingdom. When the High Priest asks him whether he calls himself Messiah and Son of God, he is credited with replying, "You will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of Heaven." It is useless to speculate on the historicity of these words attributed to Jesus. They certainly reflect an attitude which there is additional evidence to support and circumstances in the situation to make plausible. It is not difficult to understand the passage from the announcement of the Kingdom to a belief that he himself should usher it in after his death, whose violent coming Jesus seems, from the moment he arrived in Jerusalem, to have foreseen.

But it is not possible to do more than speculate on the definiteness or certainty with which Jesus regarded himself as the coming Messiah. If he did so regard himself, he did it with misgivings, and however much one discounts the Gospel reports in the Garden at Gethsemane, there is an atmosphere in the whole Lucan account which seems to give verisimilitude to Jesus' sense of failure. He had tried to cleanse the temple, and he had succeeded only in irritating the authorities. His own disciples had begun to have fears and misgivings, for in their minds if not in Jesus', he was and had long become for them the Messiah. It was

no wonder they scattered upon the arrest of Jesus. The Messiah came in glory; only the accursed were nailed to a Cross. The Crucifixion has become so overlaid with the tenderness and the devotion of Christian tradition, it has become in the thinking of Paul and in later theology so much the center of Christian belief and historically so much the instrument of its triumph, that the brutal fact of the matter in its contemporary context is forgotten. Jesus was killed by the Roman authorities at the request of the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities as a false pretender to be the King of the Jews. The Crucifixion, possibly in his own eyes, and certainly in those of the disciples, was the seal of his failure. Only by a miracle of faith in his simple and devoted followers did it become a triumph. But it became a triumph by making the theme of the Crucifixion and the character of its victim something that Jesus could never have dreamed.

The career of the faith of the Apostles is the transition between the teaching and self-awareness of Jesus and the faith of and according to Paul. That the Apostles were shocked, disillusioned and frightened by the arrest and Crucifixion, there can be no doubt. Their leader, who was to usher in the Kingdom, was crucified as a common criminal and an upsetter of the Roman peace. The very fact of his condemnation and his execution were sufficient to shatter the most robust faith. That Jesus was the Messiah and that he had been killed were, though it was in no such intellectual terms that the Apostles conceived it, a contradiction

in terms. Christianity as well as Christ came very near dying on the Cross.

But the faith of the Apostles, by whatever psychological analysis one explains or fails to explain it, triumphed over the apparent finality of the death of Jesus and made of that very death the cornerstone of their faith. After their fears had subsided—the story is none the less extraordinary for all its familiarity and none the less profound in its consequences for all its simplicity—the Apostles returned to Jerusalem.

Jesus, with the idea he had made of himself of the Messiah, the restorer of the Kingdom, an idea that he thought he should realize in his own person, in one sense marked the bankruptcy of the Jewish hope; but he contributed to a work larger and less imaginary than he had dreamed. He had died for a reign of God which never came and never will come; but it is in his tomb that was born the Christian Church.¹

The Crucifixion, in the history of Christianity, is part of the life of Jesus. For Paul it is the beginning of his life as the Christ; and by the miracle of faith if not of fact, the Resurrection. The faithful women went to the Tomb to do the last services for their dead Friend. They did not find the Body. To Peter came a vision of Christ in glory. It was an experience shared by others. The belief became a contagion, and out of the defeat and the humiliation of the Cross, the Apostles made a triumph. They fitted the death itself of Jesus as a proof of their antecedent belief in Jesus as the Messiah. What was to be a stumbling block

¹ Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

to the Jews, as Paul called it, was to them, the Apostles, once they had had time to recover from their shock, a stumbling block no longer. Say what one will; say that the Apostles saw what they wished to see, believed what they wished to believe. But the logic of their psychology at least is clear. Jesus, they had believed, before his death, should usher in the Kingdom. But the Kingdom was in the tradition come from on high. The Messiah was a divine messenger. If all the just needed to be resurrected for the Kingdom, why should Jesus not be resurrected like them and before them. God had, through the Crucifixion, taken Jesus to him in glory, and Jesus should come again, so their faith worked out the scheme, in glory. For it was not the humble Galilean teacher of the humble who had died. It was the Messiah foreordained by God, divine and deathless, who had perished that he might return in glory and come again to bring salvation to all who should believe in him. The Apostles had already believed that Christ would come again; his death, once the shock of it was softened, did not alter the case. The Cross was not an ignominious end to a pretender. It was the entry of Jesus into his glory at the right hand of God. The Kingdom was surely imminent now and it was Christ in glory who should bring it—and soon. That Peter should have seen Christ in glory, what was this but a vision exactly coincident with what their desperately riddled faith needed for its rehabilitation? The Resurrection made all things clear and plain. The Jesus whom they had believed in as a leader and a future

Messiah when he was alive, was so much the more believable now that he was dead. The Kingdom was that much nearer; Christ could return only after he had left this earth and his mortality. The Kingdom was that much more imminent now that Christ had been transported to glory. And had not that glory been attested by Peter's vision?

The Apostles, and Paul was to quarrel with them as Judaizers, still regarded themselves as good Jews. They believed in Jesus now as the Christ in fact in glory—they who had believed before in Jesus as the Christ to be. Their belief was transformed now into an assured waiting for Christ himself to return. Their faith could have seemed to them not very different from their faith in Jesus alive. But to the Jews it was very different. It was now sheer blasphemy that they were believing, these followers of the dead Galilean leader. They were alleging that a pretender nailed to the Cross was the Messiah who should come again. The beginning of the rift with Judaism had come, though it was to be Paul who was to make that rift more complete, on the one hand by making more emphatic and clear the eternal and divine being of Christ, on the other hand by transforming the faith of the Apostles by cutting it loose deliberately from any attachments to Judaism to which their own faith was still securely tethered.

There was a rift with Judaism by the very fact that the almost fanatic heresy of their belief set them apart as a suspect group, and kept them together by their own ardent and urgent expectation of the Second

Coming. They were not followers of a living leader but expectants of a Messiah now in Heaven, whom they identified with the leader they had known. They were bound together by both the opposition and suspicion of their fellow Jews and by the unique form of their expectation of the Kingdom. It was no longer alone the Kingdom they expected; John and Jesus had expected that. It was the Coming Again in glory of the Christ whom they had known in the flesh and who had been their leader. Their hopes as well as their fears bound them together, their memories as well as their expectations. The faith in the Christ to Come Again was colored by the history of and the recollections of the leader they had known. Their expectation of Christ to come in glory was indissolubly allied with a celebration of their leader, lost to them only in the flesh, by whose death the Kingdom was soon to come and they to enter it.

The group thus instituted by fear, by need, by expectation and by memory, began, though the Apostles observed the Jewish ceremonials and prayed in the Temple, to have a cult distinguishably its own. It was none that Jesus had given them, for Jesus thought no new rites worth prescribing in the short interval before the coming of the Kingdom. He had at most given them a prayer. If Jesus were baptized by John—and there seems reason to believe he was—Baptism had none of the sacramental significance later ascribed to it. The last supper with the Apostles was a serious and solemn matter, but it had not at the time the

theological values later attributed to it. Jesus may well have said to those at the Last Supper, "I will not drink the product of the vine again until the Kingdom of God." He is not thereby announcing in any sacramental sense his own death. He is simply giving an intimation of a reunion in the celestial kingdom. Neither Baptism nor the Last Supper had as yet acquired the sacramental values of Baptism to the later believing Christians or the Lord's Supper to Paul or the Eucharist to his successors.

But at the hands of the Apostles, both Baptism and the Last Supper began to acquire a special and a mystical significance. Their own communal meals, where the memory of their dead leader and the expectation of his early and glorified return were most alive, became allied with the Last Supper they had had with him. The communal meal of the Apostles became a memorial and a reënactment. The community of Apostles comes to have a mystical solidarity, the meal itself a gauge and foretaste of the awaited Kingdom, being the banquet of Christ, where his presence is in some manner anticipated, along with the felicity of the Kingdom. In the same way, one is baptized to and in the name of Christ. From being a bath of purification, a symbol of repentance and a changed life, the baptismal rite became an initiation into a society of believers, a confirmation to the society of Jesus as already glorified and the Messiah to come again. The baptismal rite tended at the hands of the Apostolic believers to become an external outward sign of the

mystical identification with Christ of which Paul was to make so much.¹

It was long before precise theological formulations were given to either of these two distinctive rites. It was to be generations before the communal meal was to be the Eucharist, before Baptism was to be an official sacrament of a universal Church. But the elements of those sacraments were already there, and they revolved around the mystical relations between the small group of devotees of Christ glorified and his now invisible but—to the faithful—living presence.

Paul found these rites and the mystical and invisible eternal being of Christ already in existence. At his hands the rites of both the religious meal and the Baptism were to be instruments of mystical salvation through identification with the eternal Christ himself. And the eternal Christ comprised in Paul's conception that Jesus who had been crucified, that Messiah glorified, who was still, to the Apostles, the Messiah to come, and also the divine essence, distinguishable (but not altogether so) from God, who was Paul's own mystical concern.

The teachings of Jesus himself, the ineffaceable impression of his personality, the Messianic hope of the Apostles, all these Paul himself had known and they remain in the background and determine the contours of his faith. But it is not Jesus the Galilean, not Christ, the Messiah to come, of whom Paul primarily or generally speaks or who is the center of his faith.

¹ Cf. Wilhelm Heitmüller, *Taufe und Abendmahl in Uhrchristentum*, pp. 10-14.

Jesus believed himself, and not without reason, to have continued the tradition of the Prophets; the Apostles, after his death, believed, not without some justice, that they nourished still a Jewish Messianic hope, a hope which paradoxically and heretically enough they identified with the crucified Galilean. But though the history of Jesus, as the Apostolic tradition had it, and the Apostolic faith were known to Paul, they were not his faith; nor was Jesus as he may be presumed to have conceived himself, nor Jesus as the Apostles cherished and expected his return after his death, the Christ of Paul. Indeed, it was precisely the second Jesus, become the Christ glorified of the Apostles that had so provoked the persecuting zeal of Paul. He was familiar enough with the teaching, but it seemed to him, strict Pharisee as he was, sheer blasphemy. He boasts indeed that it was not Christ after the flesh, Christ as he had been when known to the Apostles as the human Jesus, that he had known.

Who was the Christ Paul had known? None other than Christ in glory whom he had seen at Damascus. We have previously dealt with the analysis that may be offered of the psychology of that vision and its effects, which together are denominated the conversion of Paul. It is not proposed here to reconsider that question. The fact is that in Paul's conception of Christ, if anything so powerful and vivid and personal a vision can be called a conception, the Christ known, the manner of knowing were both as different in scope and character from Jesus as he knew himself as from the Jesus whom the Apostles had known with their

own eyes and loved and expected to know again when he should return in glory. At first blush, the Christ glorified whom Paul seems to know is identical with the Christ glorified of the Apostles. But a closer examination reveals a profound modification. Jesus had been glorified. That the Apostles firmly believed. He would return to fulfill the Messianic hope for the people of Israel. The Christ glorified of Paul was a universal savior. He was to return; that Paul believed as firmly as the Apostles.¹ The Christ in glory was, as the Apostles believed, the crucified Galilean. But for Paul his resurrection is the central fact about him, and the significance of that fact is that he will come again to save all those who call in faith on his name, Jew or Gentile, barbarian or Greek, slave or free. This was not the Christ whom the Apostles knew nor was this new and universal saving function of Christ the function of Christ in the Apostolic economy of a Messianic regeneration for the Jews.

Nor was his knowledge of Christ that of the Apostles. He held, though he was wrong, that his knowledge of Christ borrowed nothing from tradition, and nothing from a human acquaintance with a human Jesus. Christ was revealed to him by himself, when it pleased God to do so. God had chosen him, Paul, to see a vision of Christ glorified, as God might choose whomsoever he wished to be saved. Paul knew Christ as mystics have always claimed to know their divinity, by a shattering and immediate insight. The Greek, familiar with the mystery cults, comes to the surface in

¹ Cf. Thessalonians.

Paul the Jew on the way to Damascus. He possesses Christ and is possessed by him. He has a vision and that vision becomes his faith and his life. On the basis of that vision he testifies himself to be an Apostle of Christ, and on the possibility of a faith in the content of that vision, Christ glorified, he preaches the possibility of salvation to all mankind.

A Christ, defined almost exhaustively as a universal savior to those, and exclusively to those, who rely upon his resurrection and his eternal being, Christ known as an object of immediate vision, that is the Christ Paul refers to repeatedly. But that Christ draws color and lineaments from all Paul had heard of the Jesus he had not known and the Apostolic Christ he had rejected. Paul, as he goes on in his career, begins to amplify. He gives Christ's history in the economy of God, and that history is largely drawn from the Old Testament, from Wisdom literature, from Apocalyptic writings. Paul is driven to fill in the substantial fact of his vision with the elements of traditions he had inherited, the traditions of the Apostles for the fact of Jesus' life and death, the tradition of his people for its meaning, his own mystical experience for its validity.

By the validity of Christ is meant simply that Paul does not look to history, to tradition, to tales of others or authority of others for his belief in Christ resurrected and in salvation through him. The fact of the Savior in glory, the fact that salvation came through and only through him, was for Paul solely and sufficiently testified by his own vision. He did not need

warrant from others or proof for himself other than the appearance to him on the road to Damascus. He had seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears, and from that time forward *knew* he was appointed to carry to all the Gentiles, which is to say to all mankind, the message of salvation through Christ. There is a further meaning to the validity of Christ for Paul. It was not simply that Paul had once seen Christ. But thereafter and continuously he felt Christ to be living in him. It was his faith in the Christ he had seen that not so much *gave* as *was* life to him, canceled the body and its fatal march to doom and to death, was the animating principle of his being. It might be thus, also, he constantly preached, to all those who believed as he believed, in the Christ he had seen, the Christ who was now the essence, one might almost say the substance, of his own renewed and saved personality. The validity of the Savior was attested by a vision once, but also by an animating energy present always to Paul who believed, as would anyone who believed, by virtue of that energy itself. Paul never attempts to prove the existence or the resurrection of Christ; it is the mystical fact with which he begins—and ends.

In the closing chapter, we shall have occasion to expand on this centrality of Paul's mystical approach to Christ and to its meaning for himself and for all mankind. For the moment, in understanding the relation of Paul to the historical Jesus, it is important to remember that Paul gives the Christ mystically known and mystically always present to him, a history, and out of that history establishes the significance of that

continuing mystical presence and shatteringly known vision to mankind. The history is a Jewish history; the facts of Jesus' human biography Paul scarcely attends to at all, however much it may have been in the background of his consciousness. The only fact in Jesus' human history with which Paul is concerned is his death and that human fact is at once assimilated to the supernatural fact of his resurrection. The history of Christ that counts for Paul is one that extends further back than the memory of Jesus and the Apostles, and before the human career of Jesus. It is a history that extends back into eternity and reaches beyond the end of time. It is a history not of a personality but of a divine being, a divine being whose own brief human story is set in the cosmological perspective, in the beginning and the end of things as Paul had learned them from the story of his own people. The history of Christ as contrasted with the story of Jesus is a function of the history of Israel in which God had planned for the salvation of mankind. God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ. The death of Christ was prefigured in the sacrifice of Isaac. The resurrection of Christ was a preparation, a reconciliation, an atonement for the sin of Adam. Christ was the new man in whose death was slain the old Adam. Christ died that man, tainted otherwise forever with Adam's sin, might live.

It is unnecessary, as Matthew Arnold long ago pointed out, and it is indeed perverting to the Pauline vision, to debate too much the meaning of predestination, reconciliation, atonement, as Paul conceived them.

The accretions of later theology, the contractual conceptions of a Calvinism that converted Paul's Christ into a legal personage, and salvation through him into a legal formula, do not belong in any consideration of salvation as Paul conceived it. Paul was not an eighteenth-century English Protestant; he was not a sixteenth-century sectarian.

If Paul is to be interpreted in anything more than his own terms, one must rather look backward than forward. The Christ of his vision and his ardor has a cosmological setting and an eschatological perspective. But both came from the tradition of Paul's own people. The story of creation, of the Fall, of God's providential care of the people of Israel—Paul ~~did not have~~ to go further afield than the Greek ~~New~~ Testament, his book—perhaps his only book. The Fall of Man, the sin of Adam, the inheritance of that sin, the promise made to Israel; these materials were at his Jewish hands. The End of all things, the eschatological perspective Paul had from the rampant apocalyptical literature. The Similitudes of Enoch in some form or in some echo were clearly familiar to Paul. And the sense of a final judgment, a righteous assize, a sifting of the wheat from the chaff, the entry of the just into the Kingdom, Paul did not have to wander from Judaism to find the elements of these. The nature of God, the story of creation and the prophecy of the end of time and the coming of the Kingdom, Paul accepted almost without modification. The novelty, the originality Paul introduced, an originality which was to cost him the enmity of the Jews and the Judaizers

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among the Christians, was the use of this Jewish material to give significance to the death of Christ. For the Christ he had seen was the link in the story, the flash that lighted up the meaning of the whole. Adam had sinned, and the consequence of his sin not only for himself but for all subsequent mankind, was death. God had always intended when the proper time should come that a divine being, his own son, should be a sacrifice, a vicarious atonement for that sin. Death should be abolished and the mortal nature of man canceled by that death for all who should have faith in the divine being resurrected.

Paul keeps the eschatological perspective, too. The Judgment Day is coming and it is Christ that shall judge. The Apocalyptic writers (The Assumption of Moses, Wisdom, Fourth Maccabees, Fourth Ezra, for instance) ignore the Messiah or are unclear whether the Messiah were divine or human, or preëxistent. The Book of Enoch comes nearest to later Christian conceptions.¹ It pictures the Messiah as the Righteous One, the Elect, the Son of Man, possessor of righteousness and sevenfold rights, Wisdom and the Spirit of Power, as the revealer of all things; he is the Judge and slays sinners with the word of his mouth. But he is not divine; he is at most an angel, and he is not an object of worship.

Paul's Christ is to be worshiped above all. But Christ is also pictured in Thessalonians, both First and Second Epistles, as a being not unlike the Messiah of

¹ E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, p. 41; and T. R. Glover, *Paul of Tarsus*.

the Apocalyptic literature. It may be an early preaching of Paul's, and he may soon have passed from its temporal and pictorial version of salvation. But that setting never was quite absent from his mind:

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.¹

And again:

The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.²

Perhaps to the end Paul believed that Christ should come on the clouds and that we should meet him in the air. It is certainly true that the picture of creation and the picture of the end of things were familiar to Paul's Jewish Apocalyptic contemporaries, and his immediate predecessors were familiar to him. He awaited

¹ I Thessalonians iv, 14-17.

² II Thessalonians i, 7-10.

the return of Christ in glory, and the materials of the picture of the return he filled in from Jewish sources.

But the beginning and the end receded in his mind from the central saving fact of Christ's being. Salvation was something other than historical, it was a mystical and eternal fact. Historically the Fall of Man was balanced by the resurrection and return of Christ. But salvation was something more than an historical matter. The terms of the history were transmuted into the terms of a metaphysical mystery. Whatever be the origin and the end of things, the nature of Christ and its relation to the nature of man were the same. We find it better attested in the famous passage from the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Death has lost its sting, the grave its victory,

"but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The explanation of Christ's saving power comes through the history; a providential history conceived in Jewish terms. But the saving power itself, the nature of salvation and the means of its attainment; these are Paul's own invention. They are compounded of an attitude toward the flesh and the spirit that he did not derive from Judaism primarily but from Greece and the Orient. The Savior-God, whatever be the

Hebrew history Paul gives him and the pictorial climax he borrows from the Apocalyptic writers, is another being than the Messiah. He is beyond time and beyond history, and the salvation he effects is not an event in time but a timeless change in the nature of man. The believer shall, through faith in Christ, inherit incorruption, or "put it on."

The Christ that Paul here teaches is obviously quite another being than Jesus as he appeared to himself or as he appeared in belief and expectation to the Apostles. One leaves Hebrew history and a Hebrew apocalypse and comes to a category in Paul's thinking that has its source and its explanation in Greek thinking and Egyptian and Persian religious feeling. Plato and Pythagoras would have recognized what Paul was talking about and so would the followers of Zoroaster or of Mithra. Sin began with Adam, but it is a permanent principle; its correlate is flesh, matter, corruption. Death is not simply the wages, it is the consequence of sin. The preoccupation with sin as a sense of failure is, as we have seen,¹ not a Jewish preoccupation. Neither is the estimation of the flesh as essentially corrupt, the identification of physical appetites, especially sex, with an enmity of the spirit. Many explanations have been given of Paul's intensity on this theme; historians of the period are fond of pointing out the orgiastic corruption in the Græco-Roman world Paul knew best. Psychologists attribute to Paul some fanatic personal repression or frustration. But Paul's anguished sense of the corruption of the flesh can

¹ Cf. Chap. II.

only be understood in terms of his dualism (for better or for worse one of the chief elements of his legacy to the European tradition) between flesh and spirit. It was both a moral and a metaphysical dualism. In so far as man lived in the flesh he was a vessel of moral and of, so to put it, ontological corruption. His being was doomed to death in all that was corrupt and changeable, of all that was a slave to time and to change. There are two worlds, one of eternity and incorruption, one of time and change. In that world of time and change is the realm where men wander from the righteousness set out by the Jewish Law. But that righteousness Paul found impossible of attainment by man unaided. One could escape from the world of corruption to a world where corruption simply did not have existence. Faith was the key to that world and Christ was, in a word, that world. For the Lord is Spirit.¹ The Risen Christ and the Spirit are one.

There are many, of whom Auguste Sabatier is perhaps the best example, who have tried to make a system out of the thought of Paul. There are many reasons for declaring impossible such an enterprise. It would be particularly hard to systematize Paul's "conception" of Christ as the Spirit with the images and echoes of the simple Jesus or the Apostolic Messiah. It would be hard to say clearly or to say at all whether Paul was clear as to the meaning of Spirit, in any precise philosophic sense. There are passages when he seems very near the Fourth Gospel with Christ sim-

¹ Romans viii, 9-11.

ply a Christian name for a Greek *logos*, the Word become flesh and dwelling among men. There are passages when Christ is the name simply for the whole of that realm which transcends time and morality and corruption; which, through belief, through vision, through identification, man, all men, might achieve. Christ becomes the name for that community of immortal beings which is not so much shared by as incarnate in all believers; the Lord is the Spirit, and the Spirit is all in all. Paul is, on these lines, among the greatest of the Christian mystics and with the author of the Fourth Gospel the ancestor of them all. The nature of that mysticism we shall presently have to estimate and examine.

It is the nature of Christ as identical with Spirit that is our concern at the moment. Christ is Spirit; Paul is careful to distinguish but also to equate them. Spirit is the timeless reality of the real, the supersensible, the supernatural world. To become one with Christ, with the Spirit, to have Christ indwelling in man, is to pass from death to immortality, from corruption to incorruption, from the flesh to the spirit, to escape in essence, even before the fact of physical death, from the bondage of mortality. Salvation was not entrance into a kingdom *to come*. It was participation in a world of timeless Spirit here and now. Through Faith one shared Christ's immortal and bodiless life even before Christ's return. As one writer puts it,¹ "Resurrection yields to Immortality, the Jewish to the Greek idea."

¹ T. R. Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

Much of Paul's bitter antinomianism is to be ascribed to this sense of the division between flesh and spirit, and the passionate, though in his own right, helpless desire of man to escape forever and inexpungeably into the latter. His ethics cannot be understood in terms of a small and sniveling Puritanism, or the exasperated frustrations of a narrow and intolerant zealot. Christ was an immortal being; through faith on the part of the believer, through grace on the part of Christ and of God, that immortal being comes to dwell in man. Physical lusts were impurities and invasions of that blessedness. The body must not be soiled because all believers were part of Christ's own being. The community of believers was Christ and Christ was all in all.

Paul never ceased doubtless to expect an early second coming, and the character of an apocalypse hangs over his thinking. But set within that framework which is always to the fore, rises the notion of, the ardor for, a salvation that has no reference to time. "We shall be changed," cries Paul, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." That change would be outwardly effected when Christ should again come in glory, to reveal God's judgment on the faithful and on the faithless, on the righteous and on the sinner. But that change could be accomplished here and now in the very nature of the living believer, whose faith in Christ's saving power should change that nature. It should be Christ himself who lived henceforward in him; no longer his carnal self that lived.

Thus stated, Christ might come to seem simply a

magical principle. To be one with Christ, to be in Christ, to be in the spirit, are all one self-same thing. In him, once we have faith, we live and move and have our being. One is reminded, and the scholars are not slow to make much of the reminder, of Stoicism, and particularly of Seneca, though there is little evidence that Paul could have known the latter. But to be in Christ, to live in the Spirit, to be one with the Lord, are not idle terms for Paul. Paul took this inwardness seriously, and the reality of the Spirit and its essential identity with Christ literally. The believer was not saved by an external person, however divine his attributes. He was saved by becoming one with the nature of that Spirit, beside which his own unaided will, his own varying and corrupt existence was a privation, a death, one is tempted to use the language of Plato and Plotinus, a non-being.

There is certainly an element of Stoicism here, and Posidonius' mysticism was known at least in the circles of Tarsus. Known or not to Paul, the Christ here represented is the essential, the Christ in essence to Paul. He is not a teacher, he is not a Messiah; he is not the hero of a savior-cult, though he bears in the various contexts of Paul's teachings all these characters. He is an essence, a principle, a realm of being—into which the believer may enter through the miracle and mystery of election on the part of God and the instant miracle of faith on the part of the believer.

If Paul had been a Stoic sage, a Neo-Platonist teacher, a Platonizing Jew like Philo, this might have been the whole of Christ's being and the working of

his salvation. But Paul was not a sage, a theologian or a metaphysician. He was a mystic, Greek and an ardent Jew saturated with the tradition of his people. Christ was a principle, an essence, a Real, a Being, the sum of the real universe. But he was also he who had died that men might be free from corruption and mortality. He was that vision Paul had seen on the road to Damascus. He was the touching and suffering life that the Apostles had spoken of. He was the vehicle and the illustration of grace. He was all in all not simply metaphysically but morally to Paul. The timeless being of Christ was not the Lord to come of the Apostles, not simply that. The salvation that was possible through him was not an entry into a future kingdom. It was the possibility of initiation at once, by an act of faith, into a realm of being that had its origins and its foundations in eternity. But this high principle of salvation was at the same time the Jesus who had preached the simple heart, the pure life, the Messiah in whose coming the Apostles believed, the glory that Paul had had revealed to him on his way to persecute the Christians.

The Christ that Paul declared lived in him and might come to live in all mankind was all that Paul had ever heard of or could, given the contemporary furnishings of his imagination, have imagined of Christ. He was a person, full of grace and truth; he was a King to come in glory; he was a principle of life and the divine nature of eternal things. One may well say that there was nothing in the Galilean preachments, nothing that the Apostles believed which could have provided the

elements of that metaphysical being or the magic of translation from a human plane to another, a supernatural and timeless plane which constituted salvation for Paul. One may have to turn to Greek metaphysics caught on the wing, as it were, by Paul, and to mysteries of which he, an outsider, heard the enticing rumors, for the provenience of the Christ who shines in such remote and Platonic grandeur in certain passages in the Epistles.

But the fact remains that Christ is not simply a remote and Platonic principle in the Epistles. If he were, Paul would have been a minor as he was a confused and inconsistent philosopher, in so far as he was one at all. What gives pathos and intimacy to Paul's preaching is that it is just the simple Galilean who is fused in his imagination with the eternal Wisdom and Power, and it is the King coming in clouds and in apocalyptic splendor who is the power and the glory. But He who thus was revealed to Paul, was also He who had suffered under Pontius Pilate, and whom God had sent, His only Son, that man might escape from his own hereditary corruption, his own doomed nature, to timeless felicity with and in divinity.

PAUL AND THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS

ONE could write a monograph almost completely devoted to an exposition of Paul the Jew. For, as indicated in a preceding chapter, Paul was and remained a Jew until the end of his days. One could write a study of Paul the Greek and one would then have a picture plausible enough of Paul, by accident of birth a Jew, by accident educated formally in the Jewish tradition, but in essence a Greek mind of the late Greek world. In the same way one can treat Paul's conception of Christianity as a modification of the Judaism which was his inheritance. One would not be altogether wrong in so doing. But one could also write, and it is proposed to do so in this chapter, an approach to Paul that explains perhaps more clearly than anything else what happened to him and to his Judaism. The religion he came ultimately to preach was not a Christian modification of Judaism; it was related to something that Paul could never have heard of in Palestine, that would have been unintelligible to his Jewish hearers, or if intelligible, shocking and blasphemous. He was preaching a mystery whose lineaments were not dissimilar to those of the mystery religions current in Paul's day throughout the Græco-Roman world. Christ was not a rescuer of a chosen people, but the savior of the elect individual soul where-

soever. The former conception Paul could have got from his Jewish education; never the latter. The Savior was not an anointed being; he was divine, almost (Paul is not very explicit here) as God himself was divine. Paul could not have learned that from Jewish sources. One could be saved by the Savior not through good works but through faith, and faith consisted, as we shall see more particularly in the sequel, in a mystical identification with the divine being himself. Paul himself preaches a "mystery," and it is to something else than Judaism that we must turn if we are to understand what he meant by the expression. Paul conceived a change, almost magical in character in the life and essence of the converted being. He had no warrant for such a faith in Judaism. He speaks of the Christian life as an initiation. He speaks of the teaching as a secret. There were other contemporary religious practices addicted to the same language and the same atmosphere. The shape that Paul's Christianity came to have was that of a mystery. Its similarities to those of the mystery religions of Asia Minor, of Greece and of Egypt are so striking that they cannot be ignored. In this chapter it is proposed to study what those similarities are, what and how Paul learned from them, the significance of the fact that the Christianity of Paul, originating in the monotheism of the Jews and the moral teachings of Jesus, should transform itself into a mystery religion. It may very well be that save for this transformation, the cult of Jesus would have perished as one of the many Messianic enthusiasms that had come and gone in Israel. It may

very well be that had Paul not preached the mystery of Christ in terms at once familiar and appealing to the Mediterranean world, he too would have passed from the scene of history as a fanatic preacher of a cult that the Jews would not have tolerated and the Greeks could never have understood. It may be finally that had not Paul himself understood the life and death of Christ after the fashion of a mystery religion, he would not have been converted to it at all, could never have comprehended it, and would never have been its preacher or the inventor of its religious rôle.

It must be granted at the outset that all attempts to ascertain the exact relations between Paul and the mystery religions have remained inexact and indecisive. What Paul learned of the mysteries he learned at Tarsus in his childhood before he went to Jerusalem. Of his childhood neither he nor anyone else has very much to tell us. That Tarsus was thronged with the current mysteries, the myths and rites of Isis and Osiris, of Dionysos, of Cybele and Attis, we have evidence. That Paul could have been brought up there without having heard about and assimilated the atmosphere of these cults is almost incredible. That he was ever an initiate or an "adept" is, of course, questionable. His apparently strict Jewish training would have made that scarcely possible. He knew about the mysteries rather as an alert Jew today might know about Christianity. The mystery religions of the Mediterranean world were pervasive as Christianity is pervasive in the manners and morals of the countries of Western Europe.

But one need not press the point of Paul's exact

mode of acquaintance with the pagan cults, the secret ceremonies, the promises of salvation of those mysteries epidemic in his generation and, as we shall presently see, the prevailing temper of the Mediterranean religious interest. The fact is, as M. Loisy has made clear at considerable length, the resemblances between the Christianity of Paul and the rival savior-cults, the other mysteries of the Græco-Roman world, are striking in fundamental respects. The very language Paul uses, the promises his epistles offer, the technique by which that promise is assured to the believer, the universality of the hope it enshrines, are so like those of the pagan mysteries that if there is no connection between them, we are faced with one of the most fantastic coincidences in religious history.

What, then, were these mystery cults? It is unnecessary for our purposes and impossible within the limits of this analysis, to go into their detailed history. It must be emphasized to begin with that they were both myths and rites, the myths in every case developing later than the rites and being explanations, one might almost say rationalizations, of the latter. These myths vary widely and the details of the myths vary widely, too. The cults are widespread geographically; they are found in Greece, in Egypt and in Persia. They have a long history. Temporally indeed they reach back in their primitive forms at least, to what from a religious point of view may be called pre-history. They antedate the national and socialized religions of the Greeks, the Egyptians and the Jews. Somewhere in

Greece earlier than the seventh century B.C., some living beings were torn to pieces by the frenzied believers in some god whose incarnation those living beings were supposed to be. In rending those bleeding bodies, the believers felt they were eating and drinking immortality. Somewhere about the seventh century the myth of Zagreus arose, Zagreus whose body had been devoured by the Titans who in that devouring shared his being and usurped the immortality of the devoured god. Later, it is not quite clear when, Zagreus became Orpheus or Dionysos. The ritual of the death and resurrection of the god became moralized and spiritualized. The dark and mystical shadow of those Orphic cults lay always below and behind the clear light of the Olympian religions. The mystical identification of the believer with the dying god and the god re-arisen never died out in Greece. The secret initiation, the separate and individual salvation for the chosen group, the mysté, the adepts, the initiates, never vanished in Greece. There are echoes of it in Plato;¹ it is the theme of Euripides' *The Bacchæ*. It was to reappear again with the lapse of sunny worldliness of the Olympian gods, the social piety and the state good which that piety was supposed to insure. These began to break up with the decay of prosperity, the unity and the security of the city whose very security this very Olympian religion was supposed to secure. The mystery religions preceded the Olympian religions, though the exact nexus, the steps of evolution between them, are not clear. The mystery religions were to

¹ Cf. Gorgias, Phædo, Republic.

*Earlier
essentially non-
moral aspect
of mysteries.*

outlive the Olympian pause, the classic religious expression of the free Greek city-state. For the mystery religions, never dead in Greece, were to rise again when the temper to which they appealed and the circumstances to which that temper was relevant were once more present.

For there was a profound difference in spirit between the Olympian religion, the national and public cult, and the private and mystical mysteries. One of those differences was that of a communal cult with a public interest and a private society, with the individual interest of its separate members as its motive and its core.

The national cults of Greece and Rome, those of Babylon and Syria, as well as that of the Jews, were primarily social in their concerns and earthly in their horizons. They had, it is true, a cult of the dead, they had a conception of the after-life, but it was an existence vague and sad, which was supported, such as it was, by the care of the living. . . . The state of death could not be anything but one of shadows and terror. Even the most beloved dead were feared; their invisible presence being more dangerous than that of a visible enemy. The rites of the sepulcher, the service of funeral oblations, were inspired much less by piety toward the deceased than by the concern to keep them at a distance from the living whom they might have otherwise been able to disturb. Such survival scarcely merited the name of immortality; it had nothing enviable. It was nothing but the inevitable sequel to life, the fatal consequence of death.¹

¹ Loisy, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

Not only were the great national religions social and earthly (the Hebrew conception of the after-life, when it did make its appearance, is largely that of a transformed earth for a redeemed nation), but they were exclusive. The religion was that of the Athenians to Athenian gods; the Messianic hope was that of Jews, a chosen people, to whom alone the covenant with Abraham had been made, and to whom alone the Messianic hope had been vouchsafed.

The mystery religions moved in a totally different atmosphere and had totally different themes. They were, in the first place, universalist in character. That Paul could dream of preaching his doctrine to all men, Greek or barbarian, Jew or Gentile, slave or free, becomes intelligible in terms of the mystery cults that were casting the same wide net. The nationalist religions pursued the collective interests of the group; and those interests were temporal in character. The mystery religions had been proclaiming for centuries, and were now proclaiming more emphatically and appealingly in a time of social dissolution, that they could give to all men everywhere an assured immortality. What was required was no observance of a public cult, no conforming piety to the gods that was in essence a national law. By a mystical association, by a magical rite, and in the case of Pauline Christianity, by a change in heart and in moral character, the mysteries introduced you to a new life and made you part of it. That life was the immortal and secure life of a god.

There has been considerable speculation as to why it was that there should have been in the Græco-Roman

world so intense a hunger and thirst for immortality, and why the way provided by the mystery religions—association with and assimilation to a dying and deathless god—should have been so widespread a notion of the avenue to the gaining of that coveted bliss. The answer to the first question is not difficult. Olympianism was a *cæsura* in the religions of the Greek tradition. It sufficed, with its this-worldly collectivism while the Greek city-state endured; it sufficed no longer afterwards. To the poverty-stricken hordes of the Mediterranean world, with no civic claims and no social security, with no hopes in this world, it was a blessed anodyne to be told that by a secret rite, by a mystical union with a god, principle of immortal life, they could be secured against dissolution, and guaranteed a happy immortality. The traditional national religions, whether Greek or Hebrew, offered them problematic happiness in this world and a shadowy existence, if any, in another world. The mystery religions were indeed, in M. Loisy's homely comparison, "life assurance societies of the ancient world," life assurance societies of the future life. It was under this category that they were sought in the ancient world, and that they became preëminent.

The second question, as to why the association with a dying and deathless god should have become so popular a device for the securing of salvation, is more difficult to answer. Whether it was the dying Dionysos or the dying Osiris, the dying Cybele or Persephone gone to the land of shades, all the mystery religions had a common feature and an analogous myth. The com-

mon ritual feature was the participation in a rite in which the believer partook in the death and shared in the revived and eternal life of the god. The rituals in nearly all cases began, as in the case of the original Orphic rites, in gross physical and orgiastic rites. They may become spiritualized, vicarious and symbolic, until, as in the case of the Christian sacrament, though it is the blood and body of Christ that is mystically eaten, it is bread and wine that are consumed. In the late Orphic rites it is no longer a living incarnation of the god who is eaten, but a symbolic substitute for the living being. The rites of fertility in the mystery of Demeter and Persephone were, in the late development of the cult, not practiced in their grosser forms. The bull was buried by the Persians as a spring rite and was originally conceived himself as a divine being.

In every case some primitive rite had existed long before a myth in explanation of that rite developed. The primitive rite had a long history connected with the basic impulses and the basic seasonal and reproductive and vegetative facts of life. It was only after centuries that the primitive ritual became not only modified but spiritualized. The act of sacrifice became the central theme of a theology; the primitive ritual generated an alleged history by which the ritual became intelligible. That alleged history is typified by the Orphic cults, though it might be equally well illustrated by the myth of Cybele and Attis, of Isis and Osiris. The ritual was a sacramental reënactment of a deed once done, of a god once slain, of his im-

mortal being re-arisen to immortality. The Titans had originally devoured Zagreus, and shared and consumed his divine being. In the same way the believers in the Orphic rites mystically participated in the death and life again of their god. The rite became a sacrament, the facts of the ritual had a sacramental significance. It was not mere analogy; the believer did not merely imitate; he reënacted, which is to say, in his person he did actually enact the death and the re-birth or resurrection of the god. All this was so familiar all over the Mediterranean world that there was, in the popular sense of that word, no mystery about it. The myth of the dying and the deathless god was by the first century completely familiar; the mystic rites of identification with, of assimilation to the god, through or by means of the rite, was, however its details might differ, completely intelligible. The various cults were rivals to each other, or friendly competitors. The details of the myth, the details of the rites, might differ; the intention, salvation, the dialectic, the rites of participation in the drama of the god, his death and his life, were essentially the same. The details of many cults may have been kept secret; their burden and essence were public.

The parallel between the pagan mystery and the Christianity of Paul are, whatever be the explanation or lack of it, extraordinarily close. There is the god who dies and who is reborn to immortal life. There are the mystical rites, in the case of Christianity at least two, by which the believer shares in and undergoes his assimilation to that divine being. There is the

rite of Baptism, in which the believer reënacts the rite of Baptism itself by which the spirit revealed itself to Christ. There is the rite, or more exactly the sacrament, of the Lord's Supper by which the believer is or believes himself to be consuming the body of the divine being and consuming himself, as it were, into immortal life. There is the entrance through these mystic rites upon a new life. One has passed from the realm of things to the realm of eternity, from the realm of flesh to that of spirit, from the realm of corruption to that of incorruption. One has passed from the realm of nature to that of the supernatural, and though one continues outwardly to live in time, among things and in the flesh, one lives so no longer. It is no longer you who live but Christ who lives in you. The Old Adam has perished, the new man lives, but the new man is the divine being of Christ who has destroyed and succeeded yourself. Christianity becomes thus at the hands of Paul a mystical drama of redemption, of which Baptism and the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine are efficacious (but in Paul not adequately efficacious) sacraments.

There would be no gross historical inaccuracy in treating Christianity as the mystery of redemption, a mystery not dissimilar to that current in many parts of the Greek-speaking world. Like Orphism, Christianity had its gaze directed to another world. It turned the face of its believer toward a life to come. Like the religion of Osiris, it promised the believer that if he would identify himself with a divine being, he would be saved from death, the fateful consequence

of his own mortal nature. As in the cult of Mithra, by eating and drinking a prescribed substance, you participated in the substance of divinity. As in the cult of Demeter and Persephone, out of death life might come, apparent destruction might be the prelude to regeneration. As the believer vicariously passed with Persephone to the shades, so did the believer in Christ vicariously experience his death; so, too, as the believer in Persephone vicariously experienced the return to life again with the return of Persephone to earth, as indeed all nature shared that regeneration with every spring, so the believer passed with Christ into immortality.

There are still other ways to be mentioned in which a resemblance may be discovered between the Christian and the pagan mystery. There are, as we have already seen, resemblances between the early church and the synagogues, and the former clearly Christian church and liturgy had definite Jewish roots. But the sense of initiation which Paul particularly gives, the feeling of partaking in a mystery, of seeing no longer in a glass darkly, but face to face, in all these, Christianity, as Paul envisaged it, has close alliance with the mystery religions. You were not born a citizen of a mystery cult; you chose to enter it. So you might choose, though in the long run it was God's inexplicable designation by which you were destined to be saved, the way of Christ, the way of belief in his death and resurrection by which fact and faith in which fact alone you might be saved.

One particular point at which there is reason to

allege, though with qualification, the relation of Paul to the mystery religions, is with respect to baptismal rites and the sacramental meal. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are in Paul sacramental, that is to say, a symbol conditioning a present deeper and more decisive experience of the divine grace. The rites themselves have many antecedents in the ancient world, including the Jewish world. Paul need not indeed have looked far afield from his Jewish environment for the fact. Baptism, as practiced by John the Baptist, was a cleansing from sin, an outward symbol of inner repentance. It was a familiar practice in Judaism. The communal meal, too, was not unknown, the Passover meal, a celebration of the deliverance of the Jewish people from bondage in Egypt, being the classical instance. It was with a sense of symbolic justice at any rate, if not with historical accuracy, that the Last Supper was identified with the Passover Meal.

On the other hand,¹ rites of purification were common to all ancient religions. There are ablutions in the mysteries of Isis, and in the Eleusinian mysteries a cleansing in the sea. In the same way, communal meals of sacrifice or of celebration or of both have both Jewish and pagan antecedents. There is the eating of sacrifices in Judaism, and in pagan religions, both mystery and public, there are communal meals at which the god or the dead hero or ancestor is supposed to be present.

Paul obviously did not invent either Baptism or the Eucharist. As a rite each had its antecedents. But

¹ Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions*.

the question that concerns the student of Paul is the extent to which Paul converted a rite, drawn in its elements from both Jewish and pagan sources, into a mystery, the extent to which Baptism became something more and something other than a symbol of repentance, and the Eucharist something more or something different from a symbolic or allegedly realistic eating of a dying and immortal god.

Sufficient has been written here and elsewhere to make clear that the significance that Paul gave to the rites of Baptism and the Eucharist was the significance of a mystery. Without the mystical drama of redemption which the death and resurrection of Christ embodied and secured, neither of these rites would have the special significance it has in Paul. There is almost general agreement today that the only trace of a mystical meaning given to the Eucharist in the Gospels is a later editorial incorporation that could have no meaning save in the mystery-salvation through Christ as conceived by Paul. Jesus could not have enjoined upon the Apostles to celebrate mystically the passion of death through the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine, because the Last Supper was at most in his mind conceived as a prelude to a reunion with his disciples in the celestial kingdom. It is at the hands of Paul that it becomes a mystical reënactment of the death and resurrection, through which reënactment the believer affirms his faith and participates in the immortality of Christ.

It was Paul who made the Lord's Supper a special

commemoration of the death of Christ on the Cross. For, as Paul reminds the Corinthians:

The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.¹

Paul in scolding the Corinthians for their disorders at the Lord's Supper reminds them of the mystical significance of the Lord's Supper. For Jesus, the Last Supper was accompanied by a benediction of the wine that all drank, the food that all ate, not a mystical commemoration of his death. But it was this precisely that it became for Paul. The formula of grace and the breaking of bread became for Paul a mystical sacrament: The Lord was no longer the Messiah to come, he was Christ already dead and resurrected for the salvation of mankind. The Lord's Supper became a mystical embodiment, the bread and wine a mystical incarnation of the body and blood of Christ. As Loisy writes,²

In the ardent imagination of the Apostle, the bread broken for the Lord's Supper assimilates itself to Christ crucified for the elimination of sin, the wine of the cup identifies itself with the blood spilt for the

¹ I Corinthians xi, 23-26.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 277-78.

salvation of mankind. But these symbols that he perceives, the less the visionary attributes to himself the paternity of them, the more he is struck with them, and spontaneously, before his mind forms the image of Christ instituting, on the eve of his death—because the last Supper of Christ, as we have seen, had been put en rapport, in the first communities, with the practice of the fraternal repast of the believers—the Eucharistic Supper and defining it himself in the sense in which the author wished to understand it.

How Paul wished to understand both Baptism and the Eucharist was as the rite expressive of the myth of Christ the Savior. In Baptism one reenacted the death to sin and the resurrection to immortal life again with Christ. Baptism was no longer a symbolic cleansing from sin; it was the dying again in an almost metaphysical sense of the carnal nature to which Christ had died in his Crucifixion. In the Eucharist one participated not in the physical body and blood of Christ but in his immortal essence and his mystical reality. The theme of the mystical significance of Baptism and the Eucharist for Paul belongs in the next chapter. But that mystical significance is possible only in terms of the life and death of Christ conceived as a mystery of redemption. Baptism was in Paul neither a rite of purification nor a mere symbol. It was a realistic reincarnation of Christ's death and rising to immortality. The Eucharist was not simply a communal meal. It was a celebration of a sacrifice, it was not the eating in a physically literal sense of a god. It was the mystical communion with the spirit

of Christ risen. It was the initiation into, a real participation in the real, that is to say, the spiritual being of Christ. There is nothing just like it in the mysteries, but save in the general conception of the death of Christ as a mystery it could not possibly have come to have the meaning it has in Paul. Paul's mysticism is deeply dependent upon it, and Paul's mysticism is the essence of his doctrine of faith and of love. But Paul's mysticism is dependent on the central notion of Christ's tragic passion and his triumphant resurrection; the story of his earthly life and death is given a status in eternity, the instrument of the salvation of those identified through a mystical assimilation to his life, his cross, his rising to glory. Baptism and the Eucharist were the appropriate instruments, the necessary rites, ultimately the expressive sacraments of that salvation. Baptism and the Eucharist are the instruments that connect Paul's mysticism, at once passionate and abstract, with his own transformation of the simple story of Jesus into the timeless mystery of Christ's death for mankind. It was through Baptism and the Eucharist that Paul was able to indicate how the believer might affirm and begin to live that faith in Christ by which alone he was saved. He might affirm it by mystically identifying himself in those rites with the Christ who had lived and died, and who lived forever. In Baptism once, in the Eucharist repeatedly, the believer partook in that mystery and was its beneficiary. Through these rites specifically it came to pass that it was not the believer who lived but Christ who lived in him. The sacraments were not so much

mysteries in themselves, they certainly were not by Paul conceived of as pure magic, as being efficacious *ex opere operato*. But their meaning can only be understood in terms of the metaphysical drama, the saving mystery, of which the story of Christ's life and the providential meaning of his death were the myth, of which these rites of Baptism and the Eucharist were the external forms which mystically incarnated at once the salvation of Christ into the life of the believer and formed the link between the faith of the believer in time and his timeless one-ness with the being of Christ himself.

No one coming upon the mystery religions and the Pauline cult of Christianity, could fail to be struck by the similarities of method and atmosphere. Paul was preaching (the language is his) a mystery. What he was promising was salvation. If Christianity was so successful at the hands of the Pauline propaganda, it was in part because Paul spoke in terms already familiar to those whom he addressed. Whatever discounting is necessary to later editing of the Book of Acts, so that it can scarcely be treated by us as a primary source, there is a historical justice in the representation of Paul preaching always first to the synagogue and then turning to the Gentiles. The Jews did not or would not understand him; the Gentiles could. They may not have heard his like, but they had heard the like of his teachings before.

Again Paul's emphasis in Christianity was an emphasis on precisely those aspects of the Christian message that had made so successful the analogous mes-

sage of the mysteries. For what was it, after all, that Paul promised the Gentiles?

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

The Epistle to the Romans promises to the believer, in short, immortality, a life beyond corruption and corruptibility, a life eternal through identification with the eternal life of Christ resurrected. The pagan world could understand that. In numberless groups of them, the "virtue" of the divine being's resurrection was believed to be communicated to the members of the mystic society, so that its adherents too had acquired an immortal life which could not be impaired by bodily death.

It is often said that one marked difference between the mystery cults and the Christian mystery as preached

¹ Romans vi, 4-11.

by Paul is that the pagan mysteries were merely magical cults, that the rites of the cult were simply magical transactions, techniques of escaping the coils of mortality, magic without moral meaning or religious aspiration. The fact is that there is *some* magic in Pauline Christianity, and *more* than magic in the mystery religions. The Orphic mysteries made much of a purified life, and purification meant more than the mere observing of certain taboos. There is some reason to believe that the elements of asceticism in Plato, the definition of philosophy as the practice of death in the *Phædo*, and the notion that philosophy was in some measure an escape from the bodily and the changing things to immortal and unchanging essences—that all these things are Pythagorean, which is to say, ultimately Orphic in source. Especially in the cult of Mithra, which was to become so serious a rival to Christianity, there is far more than magic in the myth of the god and the significance of the rites of the immolation of the bull who was his surrogate. Loisy writes,¹

The mysteries of Mithra were a great religion. The god was young, beautiful, good, pure. He taught an austere morality that he had himself practiced. . . . We know now why he accomplished so gravely the immolation of the bull. It is that that salutary immolation had been the suffering of a god, and that Mithra also, savior-god and much more a savior than most of the other gods of the mystery religions, was himself in some fashion a suffering deity.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

It is true that in most of the other mystery cults, the god had no character save that of being a dying being fated to immortal life. It is true that the bacchanals of the Orphic cults, the taboos of the Pythagoreans, the slaying of the bull in the Mithra and other cults, the bath of blood in the cults of Isis and Osiris, had no specially moral character and did have a purely magical quality; the gods were not idealizations of human character, nor, save in their deathlessness, embodiments of human aspiration; the rites were simply mechanisms for accomplishing and insuring immortality. With respect both to the character of the god and to the manner of his imitation, Christianity in its Pauline form may be said to be both much more a morality and much more a religion, much less a secret science and a magic mechanical and external. Paul, as we shall presently see, though he declares he did not know Jesus in the flesh, and though he acknowledged very little special title to those who had so known him, knew or seems to have known considerably more about the life and character of Jesus than is commonly noted. It was Christ resurrected who seemed to him the one instrument of salvation, but he has considerable to say on the subject of the character of the Lord and the new type of life which mystical identification with him involves. Moreover, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which may be said to be the closest approximation to elements of the mystery religions in the Christianity of Paul, were not sufficient for salvation. The thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians with its celebration of the meaning and implication of love, Paul's insist-

ence on the fruits of the spirit when it did live in the believer, the asceticism it involved, and the brotherliness it commanded—all these are, with small exceptions, absent from the mystery religions. If Paul's appeal came from the hope of immortality his doctrine promised, it is not too much to say that part of the appeal came from the touching and ideal figure of the god he presented, and the force of the moral insistences he made.

The Christian mystery called on the part of the believer for a changed life, as well as effected it. The believer did not simply go through an instant of magic and become assured forever of immortal being. Paul again and again assures his hearers and readers of the morality that faith in Christ calls for, commands, and produces in the believer. It is possible indeed to treat the whole of Paul from the standpoint of his moral philosophy.¹ We should find many elements of his doctrine that can scarcely be duplicated in the mysteries. Such elements as it has of tenderness and charity—and it has many—of a sense of a comradely community, of a brotherhood in faith, of which there are repeated evidences, are to be attributed as much to the legend and personality of Christ that Paul inherited by hearsay and from the other Apostles as to the mystery religions. Paul's acceptance of established institutions, his conceptions of sex and of marriage, his sense of obligation to and explanation of release from the Law—all these cannot be explained simply in terms of his relationship to the mystery religions.

¹ Cf., M. S. Enslin, *The Ethics of Paul*.

One must look elsewhere for the source of these things in Paul, to his Jewish heritage, to his imperial sense, a consequence no doubt of his Roman citizenship, to that Stoic insistence on duty and on fellowship which was in the spiritual air of his native region. It requires no provincial theological preferences to see, for good or evil, in Paul evidences of a morality that could not possibly be duplicated in the mystery cults with which the Christian mystery has in other points so much in common.

It needs further to be observed that the whole mythological apparatus or if one prefers, the historical rationale, behind Paul is different from that of the mystery cults. In the first place, the dying god of Paul is not—and Paul never for once confused the two—God himself. Jesus is a divine Being but he is not God. Jesus is a mediator between God and Man, and his whole history, as well as the intention of God as involved in that history, is unparalleled in the pagan mysteries. Mithraism comes closer to it with its God militant in its strife with evil. But Mithraism was not widely current in the regions of Christian propaganda until long after Paul's day. And Mithra for all his high moral stature bears no such relation to a God absolute and One, such as Paul steadily takes for granted. As for the Providential history, the sending of Christ into the world, the voluntary and humble taking on by Christ of human form—these must obviously be thought of in terms of Paul's specifically Jewish heritage, and the tradition of the Jewish Apostles.

For tempting as is the study of the resemblances between Pauline Christianity and the mysteries, there is what might almost be described as a metaphysical difference between them. Paul thought of Christ in terms of a divine being. He thought of salvation in terms of a mystical identification with him. But his mysticism was qualified by an eschatological perspective such as is to be found neither in general character nor certainly in detail in the other pagan mysteries.¹ Broadly speaking, Paul gave a timeless mystery a temporal setting, and never freed himself, quite, even in his most metaphysical and mystical moments, from his historical and his eschatological milieu. There are passages in Paul that can be lifted out of all temporal and historical reference. There are mystical elements in his thinking and feeling that, as we shall see in the sequel, are, spiritually speaking, probably his essential teaching and his permanent religious contribution. But in the body of his writings they are definitely in that historical setting and have a historical reference. The end of the world was in no merely figurative sense at hand, and Paul no less than John the Baptist expected it. The Salvation through Jesus (the whole of the Epistle to the Romans goes to show it) was only conceivable to him in terms of the sin of Adam and the Fall of Man.

No less than Jesus himself, Paul conceived the goodness of God in terms of an apocalyptic perspective. The Kingdom of God to him no less than to John was at hand. There was to be a new reign and a New Man,

¹ Cf. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*

the transformed and regenerated Old Adam, or rather the successor to the Old Adam who had died. Paul might be described as a Jew who modified his conception of the mystery of assimilation to Christ in terms of his acquaintance with, his mystical absorption by the pagan mysteries. Or he may be described as a sensitive and imaginative mind who adapted the central idea of the mysteries to his Jewish tradition and background and to his own governing mystical impulses.

The ways in which the Pauline version of the mystery of Christ differs from the version of god and immortality in the pagan cults, are to be ascribed largely to the Jewish heritage of Paul. The center of his teaching was a faith in Christ resurrected, but Christ was the mediator between God and Man. The God Paul knew was the God of the Jews, and more specifically the God Jesus himself knew, the loving Father who was to bring soon, as he had through Jesus himself announced, his Kingdom. The morality he knew was largely that given in the Gospels, and it was postulated, it was founded upon, the Jewish hope of the Messianic reign. But he joins to these a consciousness of a spiritual regeneration, a fact at once psychological in the individual and metaphysical in the universe, of widespread appeal, and world significance. The eschatological setting becomes simply the modality, the form in which Paul expresses the new hope of redemption for all mankind. In the framework of a Jewish setting, Paul enunciates a hope of redemption for all mankind.

But whatever there may be in our conception of the exact relations of Paul with the mysteries, a relation probably never to be exactly determined, whatever differences or resemblances be found between the rites of the pagan cults and the sacraments of the Christian faith, there are elements in the Pauline synthesis that can only be understood in terms of an economy of redemption. That economy is a mystical conception of salvation by the death and the resurrection of the divine man. There are unmistakable traces of the mysteries in that formulation, a conception showing evidences also of rationalization by speculation, half Greek and half Hebraic, existent prior to Christian speculations.¹ Paul inherited the Apostolic Jesus and through him the prophetic moral ideas that found in Jesus a peculiarly moving and effective summary. But the Christ he preached was a divine savior, and the fashion of that salvation was not the simple one of repentance and the imminence of the Kingdom of God. It was the more complex one of a mystical assimilation to a divine intermediary, the attainment of timelessness and divinity through faith in and union with a deathless god. The elements of the Pauline synthesis and the synthesis as given in the Gospels are different in their provenience. The evangelical faith and the Messianic consciousness of Jesus were not possible except to a Jew living in the epoch in which Jesus had lived.

The consciousness of justification or of salvation by faith in Christ dead and resurrected . . . was not

¹ Cf. Carl Clemen, *Der Einfluss der Mysterienreligionen auf das älteste Christentum*.

possible except for a Hellenized Jew. Only Hellenized Jews, more or less penetrated by pagan mysticism, would dare to maintain that the symbols of the reign of the Kingdom of God, of justification by faith in Christ, the Savior, were at the beginning or had remained absolute realities, always observable, when salvation, according to a great part of the New Testament, was no longer the Kingdom of God announced by Jesus.¹

The fact is, whatever the technique of its evolution may have been, the Gospel *became* at the hands of Paul a mystery. The Kingdom of God from having been an event to come in time to a whole people, became an entry into timelessness for the individual soul. The Kingdom of God from being a future to be expected (though Paul continued to expect it), was primarily a transformation in the soul of the individual, a transformation effected through faith in Christ, no longer now a herald of the Kingdom of God, but an eternal central member of it, through belief in whom others too might become mystical co-members. The form of that mystery distinguished it profoundly from its rivals on the terrain in which its propagation took place. Though the Jews would have none of it, only a Jew could have invented its special lineaments and made the synthesis which it became. The history of its hero god was not vague and remote; it was familiar and immediate. The character of Christ the Savior had all the glamor and persuasion of Jesus the Nazarene. So that, again to quote Loisy:

¹ Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

If it be true that in one sense the Christian mystery saved the Gospel, on the other hand, it is not less true that the Gospel made the unquenchable vigor and the permanent charm of the Christian mystery.¹

The Christian mystery offered itself at the hands of Paul as something superior to the pagan cults, a substance of which they were the false and illusory shadows. For in the Pauline mystery the Savior had a definite history and a moral character. It was a new kind of chosen people, a new kind of universal community, not disdaining to claim for itself something of the same character and monopoly of the gifts of God as the Jews themselves had claimed. Just as the Jews had claimed that only by the observance of the Law could you inherit the Kingdom of God, so Paul claimed only by faith could you inherit that incorruption. But the exclusive manner of its inheritance was faith in Christ, and that manner of inheritance and the salvational character of Christ as contrasted with the earthly history of Jesus, was something Paul never got from Judaism and could never persuade the Jews, however much he might try, to accept. He derived it from the Greek mysteries and Greek speculations. Combining his Jewish heritage and his mystical tendencies and his acquaintance with the language and the spiritual economy of the mystery religions, he achieved a synthesis that became the dominant religion, one might almost say, the dominant mystery of the Roman Empire, in the language of Mark,² "the mystery of the Kingdom of God."

¹ Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

² iv, 11.

The effect of the faith in salvation through faith in Christ which Paul preached was in fact that of generalizing the Jewish Messianic hope and changing it from an expectation of a Kingdom to come to the sense of participation, while still alive, in the eternal life of the community of saints. Cumont and Loisy have made us familiar with the grand preoccupation which the life after death had become in the Roman Empire. There were many who converted themselves to Christianity, of whom Arnobius was one, or to other mysteries, primarily that they might be assured of immortality and guaranteed against final annihilation. It is not to the purpose here to explain why it was that the Jews had so little solicitude for the life after death, and conceived the reward of a just life, that is to say a righteous life observing the Law, to be a physical resurrection on a regenerated and flourishing earth. But in most of the Mediterranean world, political uncertainty and personal suffering, all that Gilbert Murray has summed up under the name of "the failure of nerve," had concentrated attention and hope on a life beyond the grave. The Messianic hope which Jesus and the Gospels offered could not quite have touched that aspiration. That hope had neither the other-worldliness nor the universality demanded. It was too exclusively directed at the Jews. Jesus had been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.¹ It was to Jewish sinners that he spoke and his gaze did not wander far beyond Jerusalem. There is little reason to believe that Jesus could remotely have conceived his

¹ Matthew xv, 24.

preachments as addressed to a world beyond the confines of Palestine. And that world, if he had conceivably thought of it, could not have understood a message couched so exclusively in terms of an exclusively Jewish tradition. The message of Jesus was that of a Jewish righteousness taken in an ennobled and spiritualized sense. But to repent of one's sins, to do justice and mercy, were all preached in terms that Micah could have understood or uttered, and repentance and good works were all counseled in the imminent expectation of the Kingdom. The gospel of Jesus became at the hands of Paul a mystery, and in becoming so became at once intelligible, too, and appealing to whole hordes that could not otherwise remotely have welcomed or made head or tail of it. God ceased, in the first place, to be, except in words, the God of Israel. He became the God of all mankind and concerned for the salvation of all he chose to elect; that is, without respect to their race or origin or social condition. He had sent Christ, and Christ had suffered and died, that all men might live forever mystical sharers of his immortality. He did first reveal himself to the Jews, and the character of that revelation is a Jewish history. Paul makes that abundantly clear. Its beginnings are with Adam, its first great event is the promise God had made to Abraham. The death and resurrection of Christ were the climax and fulfillment of that history. But the fulfillment was not for the Jews only. In the matter of salvation God knew neither Jews nor Gentiles, Greeks nor barbarians. The historical elements that went into the making of salvation through

Christ were Jewish; the salvation itself was universal. It was for all, and it was the immortality of the soul of each believer that was guaranteed by faith in Christ the Savior. The Cross had been to the Jews a stumbling block. And clearly enough. For Jesus had, or at least so it was alleged, announced himself as the Messiah or at the very least as his herald. But crucifixion was a disgrace, and he was cursed that was hanged.

Paul transformed the Cross into a mystical reality, with a providential history behind it and a saving purpose involved in it, and which it revealed. It had been intended that Jesus should die on the Cross. The salvation of mankind would thus be achieved. That salvation was the abolition of the mortal nature and the sinful and death-doomed being of each believer, who should by identifying himself with that life, passion and resurrection, acquire the nature of Adam before the Fall. The materials were Jewish; the utilization of them was Hellenistic. Jesus was a personality in a Jewish history. He was the inspired leader of a local and reforming cult in Judaism speaking to Jews. But Christ was a divine savior, and Paul spoke to all mankind of the unique avenue to salvation that faith in him afforded. By assimilating the story of Jesus to the mystery of Christ, Paul enlarged the scope of the message of the Gospels. He touched off springs of emotion and aspiration with which the whole Mediterranean world was familiar. He spoke a language which non-Jews better by far than Jews could understand. He had enunciated a mystery religion, superior

in its morality, more coherent in its history than the rival mystery religions. He turned Jewish materials to the uses of Greek mysteries and Greek mysticism. It was a singular good fortune for the future of Christianity. What might have perished as a Jewish cult in Galilee, fated to doom by the audacity of going to Jerusalem, was, by becoming a mystery, destined to sweep the Roman world.

THE MYSTICAL CHRISTIANITY OF PAUL

PAUL has so impressed himself upon the whole history of Christianity that it is natural that he should be read in terms particularly agreeable to some special interest of the theologian or historian. The missionary carrying his gospel throughout the known world of his time, the Jew obsessed by the Law which he has tried, half in vain, to transcend, the Greek caught up in the enthusiasm of a mystery whose central object of worship and efficacious instrument of salvation is Christ, the adorer of Jesus the person and of Christ the legend—these are all possible approaches to Paul, and all of them, within their own terms intelligible. But none of these approaches gives the whole of Paul, and for all the confusion and contradiction with which the reading of his Epistles may at first blush appear to bemuse the reader, there is, to the mind of this reader of him, no essential confusion in Paul. For Paul's impressiveness seems to me to lie not in the elements of his thinking but in the whole of it, and the whole of it lies not in his Jesus cult, not in his Judaism, not in his theory of Jewish history and his prefiguring of the transcendence of history and Law by faith and prophecy. It lies in the fact that Paul was a mystic, the first of the long line of Christian mystics, in whom history and ritual, God and Jesus, the believer

and the Church were fused in a consuming passion and a single comprehensive act of vision, which began for Paul himself on the road to Damascus, but animated him throughout his whole life as a Christian. Paul saw Christ risen, but he saw then and he saw for the remainder of his life that it was not he that lived but Christ that lived in him, as he believed Christ lived in every true believer.

It is here submitted that it is Paul's mysticism that lies at the heart of his religion, and it is a mystical Christianity, Christianity as a mystical experience, that is Paul's chief and permanent contribution to Christianity. This fact, enforced by the repeated variations of the theme of identification with Christ, has been obscured by two chief facts. The first is that Paul the missionary has been the popular picture rather than Paul the creator of the gospel that he preached. Secondly, where it has been Paul's gospel that has been preached, this has been treated in terms of a later doctrinaire theology. Concepts that are pictorial expressions of Paul's essential feeling about the Living Christ, the Spirit, have been separated out into a legalistic and casuistical arrangement of concepts: justification, reconciliation, acquittal, redemption.

Now it must be reiterated here that Paul was not a systematic thinker. On this point it might be well to quote the testimony of Deissmann, the eminent theologian, who insists, above all, that Paul was something other, and something more than a theologian.

Of his ideas of God, Paul never attempts anything that could properly be called a doctrinal statement in

the letters which have come down to us. They certainly did not stand in the forefront of any passionate struggle, as did his assurance of Christ, because of its close connection with the problem of the Law. They stood rather in the background majestically dominating the scene, like the snow-capped peaks of the Taurus range, overshadowing the Cilician plain. We can trace them more through the reflection of them in occasional utterances, in the harmonious expression of contemplation and in words of prayer than in any great doctrinal exposition. . . . Paul had found a new position with regard to God, not a new doctrine of God.¹

Paul's whole teaching is offered as a testimony of what had happened to him at Damascus and what had been happening in him ever since, the awareness and the assurance of the living Christ, the identification of that living Christ as Spirit, and the identification of Paul's retrieved self with that Spirit. The living Spirit with whom the believer was one, is the Christ whom Paul ever since Damascus felt to be his whole completely infused life. Paul's Christology is his sense of Christ's being. It is not a science and a theory, it is an absorption and an awareness. The universal Spirit and the resurrected Christ are one self-same thing. The life of any believer is essentially a sharing of, an identity with, that Spirit. All believers in being identified with that life are identified with each other as members of the Church, which is the same thing to Paul as saying members of the body of the living and immortal Christ. Paul's theory of faith in so far as

¹ Deissmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.

it is a theory is a statement of a passionate conviction, a sense that the vision seen on the road to Damascus was continued in his transformed life, that Christ resurrected lived eternally, that he, believing, lived eternally in Christ. His theory of faith for all other believers was a statement of his feeling that what was true of him was true of all believers: that they, like him, might begin a new life and live eternally in Christ. His theory of the Church was a sense of the mystic brotherhood in which all believers were one body, sharing one being, Christ's.

Paul's mysticism, whatever be the language in which it is expressed or the apparatus in which it is confirmed and supported, shares the traits of mysticisms of all times and places and rather peculiarly and intelligibly the traits of the mysticisms of his own generation. One need not look far in the Epistles to see how Paul's whole faith is a translation of what was, like the faith of any mystic, a feeling at once immediate and absolute. It is hard to disengage that feeling from the historical setting and the eschatological perspective in which Paul expresses it, but the feeling is there and the object of it transcends the framework of history and prophecy in which Paul places it. That Paul believed the story of the life and death of Jesus goes without saying. But it was not the suffering and dying Jesus but the risen and deathless Christ in whom he believed. Nor was this Christ to be identified merely with an apocalyptic vision of a Second Coming of the Savior. For the Lord is the Spirit, Paul constantly in one form or another assures us, and the

Spirit is known of the believer as the believer is known of Christ.

There are two things then to be disengaged from the framework of Jewish belief and of Apostolic teaching of Christ's life and death: Paul's own immediate sense of the being of Christ, whose being was his own, and the nature of the *Spirit* itself, the object of that feeling. It is hard to speculate as to what form Paul's mysticism would have taken if he had been merely a Pharisaic Jew of Palestine in the first century. He might have believed that there was an immortal spirit presiding throughout the universe, without ever dreaming of connecting that timeless being with the Jesus of the Gospels, or with the death and resurrection of Jesus. But whatever context he placed the Spirit in, whatever explanation he gave of a mystical identification with it, there seems to be little question that the conception of Spirit, the conception of union and communion with it was the animating and unifying principle of his religion. One may speculate as to what form Paul's mysticism might have taken had not his imagination and his training been assimilated by the forms of the Jewish heritage and by his Apostolic associations. Certainly the conception of a Spirit which was all in all and everywhere, a principle of light and life and being, was not unfamiliar in the Græco-Roman world. It was a cardinal principle of Stoicism and there is in at least two writers, namely Seneca and Posidonius, a conception of spirit to which Paul seems not unfamiliar and which his own closely parallels.

The Stoics believed in a divine *pneuma*, a god-spirit which was all in all. And with Philo, though it is hard to establish any direct connection between them, Paul bears resemblances. If one were to select from Paul simply those instances in which he speaks of a divine substance, which indwells in all beings, one would have a Pauline picture of the Cosmos not unlike that given with different accents by Neo-Platonists and by the Stoics; even to the extent that Philo might have said it is not I that live but the One that lives in me. With respect to the matter of immediate feeling of this presence, too, there is nothing specifically or exclusively Christian about Paul. The Neo-Platonist, too, felt himself filled with God, and mystics East and West, from Indian sages of centuries before Christ to Jacob Boehme have felt the enraptured indistinction between themselves and divine being.

Paul's passion is that of the mystic in any age. But whatever the relation of his to other types of mysticism, it must not be confused with them, and especially must it be distinguished from the speculations of Neo-Platonism. With respect to the latter, it is of course clear, as has been so often repeated in these pages, that Paul was no metaphysician. He could not if he would have created such a system as that of Philo; he was never clear in his own mind as to the exact distinction metaphysically between God and Christ (that complication was left to later centuries). His mysticism, however controlling and governing it may have been in his thinking, was in several curious

and important ways distinctively Christian, and distinctively his own.

Paul's mysticism must furthermore be distinguished from independent and unaided ecstasy. There are reasons enough, it must be admitted, to see in Paul elements both of speculative and of an ecstatic mystical experience. That Paul was temperamentally the "ecstatic," he himself gives us specific reason to believe:

I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, . . . And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations . . .¹

Paul was a mystic, accessible to visions, to an immediate sense of the divine. But he was himself suspicious of undefined ecstasy, nor did he think that such ecstasies came of themselves or that they could or should be cultivated. The spirit bloweth where it listeth, and visions and revelations were a matter of God's grace. "One of Paul's splendid achievements in the life of the early Church [was] the transformation of the conception of the Spirit as a fitful energy accompanied by extraordinary manifestations into that

¹ II Corinthians xii, 1-7.

of an abiding inspiring power which controls conduct in the interest of love." ¹ Paul never doubted that he saw Christ risen in glory. He never doubted also that that vision was vouchsafed to him as an act of God's grace. But that vision was a continuing testimony with him, and testimony of something more absolute and in a sense more abstract than his vision of Christ at the right hand of God. What Christ meant to Paul's mystical faith is nowhere better expressed than in that passage from I Corinthians: ²

For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The Lord is Spirit. And Spirit is everywhere. Now on the face of it a Stoic might have spoken thus of the divine energy, and Philo and the other Neo-Platonists might have spoken thus also. But when Paul speaks thus, he does so with a difference. Spirit, in the first place, is not really everywhere. It is only in the being of Christ and of those who share his being in virtue of their faith. The indwelling Christ is for Paul an infusion of grace. One is thereby translated from the world of flesh, of sin and of death, to that of spirit, of grace and of life. The identification with Christ is the passage from one world to another, from that of time to eternity, from that of death to life, from mortality to immortality, from corruption to incorruption. To the Neo-Platonist there is but one world of true

¹ H. A. A. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

² xii, 13.

being to which one may from privation of being return. To Paul there are two worlds from one of which one may, by an act of grace on the part of God, by an act of will guided by grace and prompted by love, escape. Paul the mystic in sensing the being of Christ finds the clue, the key and the way to freedom, from death to eternity and from bondage to liberty. To be in Christ is to be in another world, in which flesh and corruption and time and death are annihilated. It is commonly said that mystics are monists. Paul is a dualist. His mysticism is an act of vision by which, not unaided, the soul passes from the realm of bondage of the flesh and the Law, to the realm of Christ and liberty. That realm is universal for those who have entered it, and its substance is in the resurrected Christ.

Paul's mysticism and Christianity are thus an ecstatic sense of the continued identity with the Lord who is Spirit. But it is also an ecstasy set within the terms defined in the Epistle to the Romans, that faith itself in Christ's resurrected being crucifies the flesh and raises the soul to a realm of pure spirit. Paul knew Christ as any mystic knows the divine. But that knowing had for him a transforming effect. It canceled that world in which, before faith operates, and antecedent to grace, man lives.

For it must be constantly recalled that though Paul very emphatically identifies Christ with the Spirit, and says that in Christ "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,"¹ there is a second sense in which it

¹ Colossians ii, 9.

might be more illuminating to insist that for Paul it is Christ, the historical Christ resurrected, who is the Spirit, and that his mysticism consists not simply in an indwelling sense of Christ's indwelling presence, but in a moral and intimate identification of the life of the believer with the life, the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Christ. Paul's mysticism is moral and dramatic as well as ecstatic and instantaneous. Christ is revealed to the believer in an act of vision on his part, in an act of grace on the part of God. But the identification, unlike the purely magical and ritualistic association of the mysteries, the purely speculative ascent on the part of the speculative Neo-Platonists, is a changed life, a vicarious incarnation on the part of the believer in the sufferings, the death and the resurrection of that Christ through faith in whom man may be, and alone may be, saved.

Paul's mysticism lies somewhere then between the philosophical union of the Neo-Platonists and the magical association of the mystery religions. The vision of Christ initiates the Christian life. Christ lives in the believer not simply as a feeling but as a kind of conduct, a kind of conduct in which for the motivations of the world of flesh and sin are substituted the motives of love for and love by Christ. Christ lives in the believer in terms not simply of his changed essence, but of his changed behavior. If it is not too anachronistic thus to put it, the being of Christ lives functionally in the life of the believer. The life of the latter is an anagram, an analogue, an incarna-

tion of the life of Christ as resurrected, and before his Crucifixion.

Had Paul's mysticism been abstract and speculative or merely ecstatic, he would have made Christ no more than the Neo-Platonists' union of the soul with the One. Had his been merely a mystery cult, some rite or ritual would have sufficed for union. But Paul's mysticism is a moral anticipation of the Second Coming. To the faithful, Christ's own life is lived in the transformed life of the believer:

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died to sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God; Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

Had Paul not identified Spirit with Christ and the resurrected Christ with the historical Jesus, his mysticism would have taken a very different form. As it was, faith displayed itself in a way of life, and that way of life was the way of the Cross. The Cross becomes a sacramental symbol and has a moral and a mystical meaning. It signifies not simply the death of Christ upon the Cross, but the crucifixion of lust,

¹ Romans vi, 5-II.

of sinfulness, of the world of corruption in the life of the believer. Once through the grace of God, Christ comes to animate the life of a believer, he may live now and here as if he were already in fact as he is already in essence in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. He may undergo in his own being the passion of the Lord, and his lusts crucified, lead a life morally identical with that of the Redeemer by whose death man is redeemed to life everlasting.

There are certain scholars, of whom Albert Schweitzer is one, who insist on the point that Paul's mysticism can only be understood in terms of his expectation of the Parousia, the assimilation of the believer to Christ in terms of the whole cosmological theory of the End of Things. There is certainly no doubt that Paul did expect the Second Coming and that he did think that in the winking of an eye we shall all be changed, and those living and dead, baptized to belief in Christ, shall join Christ in glory.

But the remarkable and perhaps curious thing is the way in which his "Christ-mysticism," as Deissmann calls it, is repeatedly expressed. We shall live after death with Christ, before death like Christ, and in essence thus even before death, live with and in him. Even Schweitzer, who insists so on the corporeal eschatological character of the Pauline mysticism, says that this earthly "being in Christ in itself signifies a partaking, though still hidden, in the heavenly corporeity of Christ."¹ This being-in-Christ is for Paul at once a psychological sense of immediacy of Christ's

¹ Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

indwelling presence, and an identification through behavior. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."¹ Thus he declares in Galatians, and in Romans he admonishes his readers, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."²

Now what does it mean for Paul for living men on this natural earth to put on Christ? It means in the first place that they have, despite appearance, died. They are only in outward appearance natural men. They have already in essence died and risen again. In this they are one with Christ; they have psychologically and morally, one might almost say metaphysically, anticipated their resurrection in glory to be revealed in fact upon their actual bodily death.

That resurrection thus, as it were, attained by anticipation is a life that passes like Christ's on the one hand through suffering and death, and on the other is itself, as revealed in transformed conduct, a resurrection, a new being, "a new man." Suffering is indeed to Paul a minor death. "I die daily," he tells us;³ "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."⁴ The sufferings Paul underwent, he regarded, the sufferings of any believer he held, to be vicarious experiences of the sufferings and the sacrifice of Christ. To suffer is to experience the Cross.

But to die daily is more than to suffer. To become one with Christ in faith is to die to the flesh, as Christ died to the flesh upon the Cross. That death is the death of the old man, the Old Adam, the beginning of

¹ Galatians iii, 27.

² Romans xiii, 14.

³ I Corinthians xv, 31.

⁴ Galatians vi, 17.

the new life. In suffering one is fellow with Christ, united with him. In the negation of carnal motives and impulses, in denying the flesh, one is destroying it. One is dying with Christ and rising again to a new life, in which one is in the body, but not of it. One lives now in the Spirit, and that Spirit is Christ's, and is Christ.

The new life which follows upon conversion to Christ might almost be said to be living on earth as if one were already in the Kingdom of God. That implies two things, one negative, one positive. The negative is that one has become dead to the flesh (which is death), dead to earthly motives, dead to action on the carnal level. Paul's Christ-mysticism is in no small degree a moral matter. It is a crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts and a walking in the Spirit.¹ The whole of the Epistle to the Romans is a study and a statement of the way in which the natural man is slain and the new or inner man comes to life. The natural man dies and lives again as a new and a spiritual man, morally and mystically one with Christ, with whose death and resurrection the life of the believer is identified.

Flesh and spirit are antithetical realms, mutually exclusive worlds. Through faith one passes from one to the other. Adam, through the inescapable heritage of sin, inescapable except through Christ, lives in the fleshly man. Christ lives not only in essence but in action in the lives of the faithful. Odd though it be to call Paul a pragmatist, the transformation through

¹ Galatians v, 24 and 25.

identification with Christ is expressed specifically by him in pragmatic terms:

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.¹

But for Paul, to have life by the Spirit, truly to have it, is to walk by the Spirit. The mystical identity with Christ is not a moment's ecstasy, and then a falling away. If the identification is real, it is continuous, and the flesh with all its lusts is truly slain.

It is not a question of imitating Christ in any mere sense of behaving in the external incidents of life as Jesus behaved. It is rather that faith in the indwelling of Christ in the believer and faith in the resurrection of Christ as Lord, as Savior and as Redeemer, transforms the whole life of the believer himself. His conduct becomes an expression of the being of the Christ in him. In so far as he is saved, he is all Spirit, in so far as he is Spirit, he is one with Christ. As Schweitzer well puts it, "though his [Paul's] work lies in the world, he ventures to live the unworldly

¹ Galatians v, 19-25.

life, and to rely only on the power which is at his disposal, because of that which he, in the Spirit of Christ, has inwardly become.”¹

To walk in the Spirit, to be one with Christ, might, it would seem, lead in Paul to a purely negative and nihilistic mysticism, a contemplative detachment, a Christian Nirvana. It might have become, as it is in the mystery religions or Neo-Platonism, merely an absorption into eternal being, a putting on of immortality. There are not wanting traces of both in Paul, but Paul's mysticism, like that of many other practical mystics and enterprising ecstasies in the Christian tradition, was conceived in terms of a life-transforming activity. Paul knew what it was to be gathered up into the third Heaven. He knew what it was, too, at least according to the words attributed to him in the Book of Acts, to say in Him we live and move and have our being. But in the Epistles it is a missionary as well as a mystic speaking. Paul is interested in what this sense of the being in Christ could do to the baptized and the converted. Life in the Spirit is the release of new power, of new motives, of a new “Law of the Spirit” to replace the bondage of the Law. He tells the Galatians that if their motive power is the Spirit, they are not under the Law.² The Law, he had repeated to the Romans, endured as an obligation that the natural man could not fulfill. To fulfill the spiritual obligations of which the Law was a literal statement, one thing above all was needful, love. And love is above all things for Paul a gift of the Spirit; it is

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 333.

² Galatians v, 18.

in the mutual sense of being in Christ, of Christ being in us that love is realized and becomes an operative force.

By love Paul meant at once the adoration of Christ, or through Christ of God, and the solicitous tenderness of God for man through the extending of the grace of salvation through Christ. But love for Paul was equally something metaphysical. That play of tenderness of God toward man, that adoration of man toward Christ were a phase of, a participation in, the eternity of Spirit. Love is Spirit in its most radiant and its most generous aspects. It is a way of speaking of the intimacy of the believer with Christ, of the shining in a temporal life of eternity, of temporal living given immortal character.

The possession of Christ is a communion of love, and love is a manifestation of Spirit, a radiation of grace. The love of man toward Christ is an inversion, a re-flowing of the love of Christ to and for man. It is the contagion, the communication, the identity of union, of Spirit living in man as Spirit, of man alive in the possession of, in possession by Christ. Christ-union is thus for Paul summed up in Love. The famous thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians is an eloquent pæan to this summary excellence and this central gift of the Spirit. Faith and hope are directed to the future, to the actual, factual entry of the redeemed into Heaven. But love is Spirit lived here and now.

Love is then a name for the relation of the Spirit-in-Man to Spirit itself, of the believer to Christ. It

is a name for the contagion of intimacy between Christ and the Christian. It is a way of speaking of the Spirit incarnating itself in man, of man losing—or finding—himself in Spirit.

Were this all, the Pauline mysticism would be a rapture of the lover losing himself in the beloved, the Neo-Platonic communion of the alone with the alone. In Paul, however, this intimacy is dynamic in its effects. Love is what love does, and to be one with Christ is to walk in the way of love. It is to have an energy and direction of behavior which is in essence that of Christ, not that of the carnal man over whom the Christ-in-us has triumphed.

Paul's ethic, therefore, in its specific characteristics, turns out to be largely the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount given a mystical and metaphysical support. Ultimately that lover-like identity of the believer is the love of God himself, "shed abroad in the Holy Spirit, which is Christ, in the hearts of men." Love is at once the testimony of God's and of Christ's being, and the creative and liberating core of the new and transformed, the spiritual as contrasted with the carnal or fleshly—and doomed—life.

In its specific characteristics, Paul's ethics turns out to be the ethics of Jesus, the ethics which Jesus had preached in terms simply of the imminence of the Kingdom of God. Paul, too, believes in that imminence, but in him the ethics of Jesus has a speculative and mystical confirmation. For his ethics is not that of an inspired preacher urging repentance but that of a mystic insisting that intimacy with Christ expresses

itself, inevitably, in a way of life, in essence, not simply in external detail, Christ-like. To be in the Spirit is to live a Christ-like life; to live Christ-like is to be in the Spirit.

It may be alleged and with justice that there are elements in the Pauline morality which are not those of Jesus. These flow from the sharp distinction Paul made between flesh and spirit, and his fanatic contempt for and fear of the flesh. The historian or the psychiatrist may speculate as he pleases on these elements of provincialism and fanaticism in Paul. In detail few men even of genius altogether transcend their age and its mores. Paul's acceptance of slavery, his subordination of women, his extreme asceticism, are partly accounted for by his own powerful expectation of the End of Things and the coming of the Kingdom and partly by his conventionality (as is so often the case with religious innovators) outside the field of his own special intuition. His logic of flesh-sin-death explains his emphasis on the ideal of celibacy, his reluctant concession to marriage. It must further be remembered that he was writing letters of exhortation to congregations given over to disorder and hysteria, and that some of his congregations were in centers, like Corinth, infamous for their degradation and sordidness and wanton debauchery. Paul was a lay preacher as well as a mystic, and his exaltation of seemliness, order, and decorum are functions of the situation he found in the congregations he addressed. In the same way, he is a Roman citizen as well as a teacher of the universal salvation of mankind, and it

is as a Roman citizen that he respects and exalts imperial authority. In short, Paul was a man of his age, as well as a mystic of all ages. But the dominant note of his ethics is not to be found in nor is his ethics to be judged by these incidental details. Its profounder and more comprehensive temper is singularly like that of the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount. Love is the gift of Spirit, and the guiding principle in his ethics is love: "by love serve one another," he tells the Galatians.¹ And for all his minor injunctions, this is the key to his underlying moral motivation; even the expression of the motive of love is strikingly reminiscent of the Sermon on the Mount: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love."² Or again, "Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."³ And "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."⁴

The temper of the Jesus of the Gospels speaks in these utterances, and there is not much question that in this respect certainly, with reference to love, Paul had, as he said he had, the mind of Christ. Christ commanded love because we are all children of God, and the Kingdom cometh. Paul enjoined it, because we are all, in so far as we are alive, in so far as we

¹ v, 13.

² Romans xii, 10.

³ Romans xii, 19-21.

⁴ Romans xiii, 10.

are saved, one mystically and metaphysically one with Christ. And in so far as we are thus one with Christ, we are all mystically and metaphysically one. Paul's mysticism is not that of an isolated ecstatic, but rather of a society of those whose lives are identical soliloquies and who in so far as they live in the Spirit, are one spiritual substance, the collective corporeity of that Spirit which is Christ.

Among those who try to isolate Paul's concepts and turn his mystical passion into an organization of dogma, it is fashionable and it is found profitable to discuss his theory of the Church. In a sense he did have such a theory. For to speak of all believers, of the saints as participating in a common substance, sharing the body of Christ, *is* a theory. It was in the hands of St. Augustine to become the intellectual rock on which the Church and the statesmanship of the Church were founded. But the theory, like any other intellectual formula in Paul, flows again from his central mystical intuition. If any believer lives by virtue of his identity with Christ, then all believers live in that identity and are identical with each other. The Church is the spiritual body of Christ, and all the Church is the mystical society of all believers. All are Christ, and all are one.

It is in this sense that the term "Mystical Christianity of Paul" is most appropriate. For the spirit of Christ is not simply that which is, in so far as he is truly alive, the life of the believer. It is all believers, and all believers constitute his Being and are at the same time his Church. The sacraments of Bap-

tism and the Lord's Supper are peculiar enactments in ritual of a mystical truth that transcends the sacraments. The rituals do not constitute a magic by which the believer is made a Christian. He is made a Christian by love and by faith. He possesses and is possessed by Christ. But the sacraments are the seal and sanctification of this intimacy of union. They are the evidence and the instruments of union with Christ; they are not its sufficient cause. It is the dramatic enactment of an inner mystical feeling which utters itself in faith and hope, the expectation of the union in fact with Christ in Glory, and love, the sense of sharing spiritual intimacy of that union here and now. In the rite, in the ritual of the Lord's Supper, the collectivity of that experience for all believers is made visible, intense and confirmatory, and faith and love are strengthened, too, in the hearts of each believer.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.¹

And again, with reference to Baptism, "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."²

But neither the sacraments, nor Paul's conception of the Church, nor his ethical commands and injunctions can be understood simply in terms of their historical origins and affiliations, their resemblances to similar practices among the Jews and among the

¹ I Corinthians x, 16-17.

² I Corinthians xii, 13.

Greeks. They are given the special intensity, the moral fervor and the spiritual depths which they have in Paul by virtue of the central mystical faith which alone gives all these otherwise disparate matters imaginative coherence. They are all variant expressions of Paul's unequivocal conviction that he was, that all believers were filled with Spirit, were (the identity cannot be too often repeated) one with Christ.

If Paul felt that identity with Spirit as an intimate, undefinable radiance, it was because Spirit itself was for him a radiant and inflowing life, a generosity of being extended to the believer, to the elect. Whatever may be argued in juridical and legalistic terms of election and predestination in a Calvinistic sense or a Calvinistic interpretation of Paul (and it must be admitted some of Paul's language lends itself to such casuistry), even the conception of election is that of the spirit blowing where it listeth.

That Spirit is nearly always in Paul identified with Christ. But not always and not ultimately. It is God whose Spirit is poured out on the believer through the mystical association of the latter with the risen Christ. In the end God for Paul is all in all. But that refers to the end of Christ's reign when Christ shall have turned his sovereignty over to God. *Before* the end of Christ's reign, and in the earthly life of each believer, it is not misleading to say that for Paul, Spirit and Christ are one, ultimately, though it is the Spirit of God that is revealed in Christ Risen, Christ the Spirit, Christ the Lord.

Paul attempted to expound that Spirit, to give it its

context in terms of man's history and man's destiny. One has but to read the Epistle to the Romans to see how involved is Paul's mysticism with his theory of the law and of faith, of the history of man's origin and the prophecy of man's salvation. But meanwhile these things are, as it were, an earthly and a historical context given to what is a mysticism at once private and collective, ecstatic and intellectual. On the side of ecstasy is to be noted Paul's recognition—along with his fear—of sensible manifestations of the spiritual. He himself recognizes that the Spirit manifests itself in "speaking with tongues." It has manifested itself thus to him. "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all."¹ Paul recognizes the Spirit almost as a dæmonic possession, and like Socrates when he feels he is uttering the deepest truths, is aware of himself as "inspired." Like Socrates, too, ecstasy is beyond speech and beyond thought. True ecstasy except to the ecstatic is unintelligible. And there, since Paul was a missionary and a zealot rather than a private soliloquist, lies his sense of its dangers. He recognized, as the Church was to recognize later, to what obscurities and confusions "speaking with tongues" might lead. Ecstatic speech is private communion with God. But it is communion that is unintelligible save to the utterer of it.

Paul's mysticism, therefore, is not founded on the moments of rapture in which the Spirit unintelligibly breathes in the uplifted communicant. Though not a philosopher in any systematic sense, Paul yet definitely

¹ I Corinthians xiv, 18.

recognizes the values of intellectual as opposed to merely rapturous mysticism. "To have understanding in the Spirit," Paul places, as Schweitzer points out, "above speaking in the Spirit."¹ What is hidden from men and angels is revealed to the Spirit. Spirit speaks to the spiritually awakened. Christ is understood of his own. The classical passage is, of course, the following from I Corinthians:

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.²

This passage is often interpreted as Paul's grandiose sense that he, Paul, alone and chiefly, had the mind of Christ. But there is something wide and universal involved. All men in so far as they walk in Spirit understand spiritual things. The Cross of Christ is a

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

² I Corinthians ii, 10-16.

mystery, but to the spiritual man, that mystery is intelligible and clear.

The fact that Paul refers to Christ, his crucifixion and his resurrection as a "mystery" must be understood also not simply in terms of the mystery religions to which it is analogous and from which it borrows some of its language, its symbolism and its technique. It must be comprehended as a phase of that "knowledge" which Spirit reveals to those to whom grace is extended. The crucifixion of Christ is a historical fact, but one of mystical moment, one mystically apprehended, and thus apprehended, patent. What is that mystery, to the Jews a stumbling block, which is in Paul's speculative imagination at once so secret and so plain?

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.¹

It is a mystery not only in the pagan sense of assimilation to the immortality of a god; it is a mystery in the sense of mystic knowledge. It came to Paul, as he tells the Galatians, "through a revelation

¹ I Corinthians, xv, 51-54.

of Jesus Christ." It is not the wisdom of this world, it is not excelling of speech or of wisdom, but "declaring unto men the glory of God." Paul announces that he speaks wisdom among those who are "perfect"; he speaks the wisdom of God in a mystery, "even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory."¹

What did Paul mean by his determination not to know anything among those he addressed save Jesus Christ, and him crucified? He knew Christ as a living Spirit, and that living Spirit who had died to the flesh and risen again. That "knowledge" was at once revealed to him and he reveals it as a mystery, as a mystery that to faith, hope and love, that is to spiritual insight, becomes instant and lucid. That insight demands not, nor is it susceptible of earthly proof: "Let no man deceive himself," Paul reminds the Corinthians, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."² What is this wisdom that cannot be spoken unto those who are carnal, who are babes in Christ? It is not "the thoughts of the wise" for "they are vain."³ It is the wisdom that coming in a revelation, sensed as an immediate awareness, is the identification of the believer with that Spirit which lives as an active principle in the man of faith, and is his new and controlling life. Of such could Paul say: Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

This wisdom is not earthly knowledge, for knowl-

¹ I Corinthians ii, 7.

³ I Corinthians iii, 20.

² I Corinthians iii, 18.

edge puffs up, but love edifies.¹ Wisdom perfected is love realized. It is the believer's vision fulfilled in an intimate vision of, as it is made possible by, the love of Christ. One might almost say that in Paul, genuine, which is to say, spiritual knowledge and love are one. That is what he means, among other things, by saying that of faith, hope and love, the greatest is love. Faith and hope pass with the fulfillment of the resurrection of the living and of the dead in that actual glory which Paul so confidently expected with the Second Coming. But in a deeper sense, love shall not pass, for it is timeless like the knowledge with which it is one.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.²

"When that which is perfect is come," on one level belongs to Paul's intense expectation of the End of earthly things and the beginning of the reign of Christ. But it refers also to that knowledge which is not of the flesh. Love is at once the avenue and the goal of the mystic's knowledge of the mystery of the living Christ.

¹ I Corinthians viii, 1.

² I Corinthians xiii, 8-12.

One can say as one pleases that in Paul wisdom is a form of perfect love or love perfected wisdom.

And those who share this love-in-wisdom or wisdom-in-love, are not only sharing Christ, but each other, and are filled with God's own Spirit. The Church is for Paul a collectivity in a mystical as well as a merely factual sense. It is not simply a collection of worshipers. It is a community of "saints," a collectivity of the spiritual body of Christ and ultimately therefore of God. Each man is the temple of God, the Spirit of God dwells in him; "If any Man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."¹

The Church is the ideal community of believers, sometimes thought of by Paul as preëxistent, and by election, and sometimes, perhaps most characteristically, as the solidarity of those who have a common faith, a common possession by and possession of Spirit. The Church is an ideal community, the true Kingdom of God, the real body of Christ.

Paul's mystical Christianity was less abstract and less speculative than that of the Fourth Gospel. There were to be developments of doctrine and of feeling of which the seeds may be in Paul, but whose blossoms he could not have recognized. But that Paul was at heart a mystic there can be no question. His very intensity covers the distinction of some of his concepts taken separately and studied in isolation. Whatever flight of union with Christ Paul rises to, he remains at heart a Christian who still believes in a Jewish God. What-

¹ I Corinthians iii, 16-17.

ever timeless participation in timeless Being he utters, he still cherishes, though less literally and centrally than many of his contemporaries, the expectation of the End, of the Judgment, of the glory to be shared in by the elect. Whatever high mysticism Paul talks of the Christ that lives in him, his "economy of redemption" retains the apparatus and the language of the mystery religions. And this ecstatic who reports that he had been raised to "the third Heaven" could travel through peril and physical danger and opposition and misunderstanding and revilings to preach his Gospel of Christ crucified and salvation through him.

In these brief pages an effort has been made to separate for purposes of clearer examination the strands that went into this complex and yet essentially simple religion. Its complexity lies in the extraordinary miscellany of materials which went into the language in which the intense vision and rapture of this maker of a religion expressed itself. The simplicity is that of any immediate act of vision, any intense and indubitable religious intuition. All the elements of the Pauline synthesis, a synthesis of feeling rather than of deliberate artifice, are resolved in the immediate and absolute feeling expressed in the words, "It is not I that live but Christ that lives in me." Judaism gave Paul a history and a meaning to read into that awareness; it gave him, too, the God to whom Jesus was subject as all things in turn were subject to Christ. Greece and the Orient gave him the form of the mystery which was, in rivalry with not dissimilar mysteries, to win the Gentile world. The Apostles gave him the touch-

ing teacher of repentance and judgment and the benevolence of God toward his children, the human figure who was to save his Savior from being a mere abstract formula, a mere intellectual or ritual form. But it was the mystic in Paul that kept these things subsidiary to his central flame of feeling, and made him the first of the long line of Christian mystics, and the author of a doctrine and a mystery that is given coherence *only* by that central flame. The missionary may seem both dated and intransigent; the metaphysician in Paul obscure and amateur. But he lives as one of the spokesmen of the religious imagination, speaking with the tongues of men and angels of that Spirit living in him by which Spirit he was saved, of Spirit in a living and loving identity with which alone any man might be saved.

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